

**Popular Music in Japanese School and Leisure Sites:  
Learning Space, Musical Practice and Gender**

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## Abstract

Most studies of the relationship between popular music and youth have concentrated on the leisure site. Few have considered the school, and even fewer have made any comparison between these two sites. In this study I have bridged this gap, focusing on areas that impinge within and across both sites.

My ethnographic study, conducted in 1998 and 2000 in Japan, examined how high school pupils aged 15-18 approach popular music in both school and leisure sites in relation to (a) *formal*, *semi-formal* and *informal* spaces concerning learning practices. Whereas the formal space is dominated by supervised and assessed ways of learning and legitimised knowledge, the informal space is pupil-led and involves knowledge which is not necessarily recognised by the school. Between these two, the semi-formal space is open to non-legitimised knowledge, but is nonetheless still assessed by others. Michel de Certeau's theoretical division of everyday practices – *strategies* and *tactics* – is applied to (b) *boys'* and *girls'* techniques for dealing with popular music in relation to each learning space. Distinctions were also investigated between the ways that boys and girls engage in popular music as (c) *listeners* and *performers*.

Three categories of popular music emerge from the findings and are theorised as *personal*, *common* and *standard* music. Firstly, 'personal music' belongs to each person at an individual level. It can be regarded as a form of Pierre Bourdieu's 'habitus', which exists as an embodied state and equates to private musical tastes or preferences. Secondly, 'common music' belongs to subcultural peer groups of the same generation, but not to older generations such as parents and teachers. It can be linked to Bourdieu's concept of 'acquired capital', and is obtained through the aforementioned three learning spaces. Thirdly, 'standard music' is shared across generations, including teachers, parents and pupils. It operates as 'inherited capital' accumulated by informal learning at home, and is often legitimated in the school. Whereas boys tended to situate their personal music in relation to the common music of their subcultural group, girls were likely to make use of common and standard music as 'camouflage' in order to conceal their personal music, particularly in the formal space.

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## **Contents**

Abstract	2
Acknowledgements	3
Preface on Romanisation	8
Glossary	9

### **Chapter 1 Introduction: Problems in Popular Music and Education**

1.1 Background	11
1.2 Rationale and Research Aims	14
1.3 Contribution to Knowledge	15
1.4 Research Questions	16
1.5 Overview of the Thesis	16

## **PART I: POPULAR MUSIC IN SCHOOL AND LEISURE SITES:**

### **THEORETICAL CONTEXT**

### **Chapter 2 Popular Music inside and outside School: Learning Spaces**

2.1 Popular Music inside School	19
2.1.1 What Counts as Popular Music in School	19
2.1.2 The Contribution of Vulliamy's Work	23
2.1.3 Critical Points in Vulliamy's Arguments	25
2.2 Popular Music outside School: A Critical Review of Subcultural Theory	28
2.2.1 Ethnographic Study by British Subcultural Studies	28
2.2.2 Criticisms of Subcultural Theories of Popular Music and Youth	32
2.2.3 Ethnography of 'Ordinary' Young People	37
2.2.4 Ethnography of Popular Music and Pupils in School	39
2.2.5 The Significance of Ethnography for Music Education Studies	41

### **Chapter 3 Popular Music, Musical Practice and Gender**

3.1 Cultural Capital and the Mode of Acquisition: Redefining Bourdieu's Theory in Music Education Studies	43
3.1.1 Bourdieu's Theory of the Sociology of Education and Culture	43



3.1.2 The Significance of Bourdieu's Sociology	46
3.1.3 The Significance of Bourdieu's Sociology for Music Education Studies	49
3.1.4 Some Problems in Bourdieu's Sociology of Culture	50
3.1.5 Redefining Bourdieu's Theory in Music Education Studies	53
3.2 Popular Music and Gender in Education	57
3.2.1 Popular Music and Gender	57
3.2.2 Gender and the Interpretive Possibilities of Popular Music	58
3.2.3 Gender and the Process of Socialisation in Rock Bands	62
3.2.4 Gender in Music Education	63

## **PART II: POPULAR MUSIC IN JAPANESE SCHOOL AND LEISURE SITES: FIELDWORK**

### **Chapter 4 Methodology, Conceptual Framework and Overview of Findings**

4.1 Method	68
4.2 Data Collection	69
4.3 Data Analysis	74
4.4 Definition of the Three Learning Spaces	75
4.5 Three Categories of Popular Music	79
4.6 Japanese Popular Music for Youth Today	81

### **Chapter 5 Popular Music, Musical Practice and Gender in the Formal Learning Space**

5.1 Personal Music in the Classroom	87
5.1.1 Boys and Personal Music in the Classroom	87
5.1.2 Girls and Personal Music in the Classroom	96
5.2 Common Music and Standard Music	102
5.3 Gendered Ways of Dealing with Personal Music	112
5.4 Popular Music in the Brass Band Club	117
5.4.1 The Music Club in Japanese Schools	117
5.4.2 Boys and Popular Music in the Brass Band Club	119
5.4.3 Girls and Popular Music in the Brass Band Club	123

5.4.4	A Change of the Same Individual's Discourse in Different Settings	125
5.5	Summary	129
 <b>Chapter 6 Popular Music, Musical Practice and Gender in the Semi-formal Learning Space</b>		
6.1	Popular Music in the Folk Song Club	131
6.1.1	High School Y and Its Folk Song Club	131
6.1.2	Boys and Popular Music in the Folk Song Club	134
6.1.3	Girls and Popular Music in the Folk Song Club	149
6.2	Popular Music in the High School Pupils' Band Event	155
6.2.1	Boys and Popular Music in the High School Pupils' Band Event	155
6.2.2	Girls and Popular Music in the High School Pupils' Band Event	173
6.3	Summary	174
 <b>Chapter 7 Popular Music, Musical Practice and Gender in the Informal Learning Space</b>		
7.1	Popular Music Listeners in Leisure Sites	176
7.1.1	Boys as Rock Listeners	176
7.1.2	Girl Listeners in the Indie Record Shop	181
7.1.3	Girl Listeners in the Visual Band Costume Play Gathering	183
7.2	Rock Performers in Leisure Sites	196
7.2.1	Boys in the Band Peer Group	196
7.2.2	Girl Performers in the Mixed-Gender Band	207
7.2.3	Girl Performers in the All-Girl Band	209
7.3	Summary	221
 <b>Chapter 8 Conclusion</b>		
8.1	Popular Music and Sites: Place and Space	224
8.2	Popular Music and Space: Personal, Common and Standard Music	225
8.3	Popular Music and Gender: Strategies and Tactics	228
8.4	Popular Music and Musical Practices: Inherited and Acquired Capital	230

Appendix A: CD-ROM Supplement: Japanese Popular Music	233
Appendix B: Transcript Notation	234
Bibliography	235

## **List of Tables**

4.1 Interviews with boys and girls as performers and listeners in school and leisure sites	71
4.2 Interviews with boys and girls as performers and listeners in formal, semi-formal and informal learning spaces	72
4.3 Three learning spaces and the determinants	78

## **Preface on Romanisation**

The orthography of Japanese consists of *kanji* (漢字) , *kana* (かな) and *katakana* (カタカナ) . Syllables in Japanese can be transcribed only with *kana*; however, Japanese is usually written in a mixed form of *kanji* and *kana*. *Katakana* is used for words of foreign origin or onomatopoeia.

In this thesis all Japanese terms have been romanised in the Hepburn system, except that long vowels are marked with a circumflex rather than a macron. People's names and other proper names are the exception to this rule because each person and proper noun has its own romanised form of spelling. Whilst a long vowel is usually written 'â', 'ô' or 'û', in the case of people's names or proper nouns, either a long vowel or a simple vowel ('a' 'o' 'u') is used according to the preferred style. In Japanese, personal names are used in the order of surname then given name. However, in this thesis, I put all Japanese names following the tradition of the English order, i.e. given name then surname. Otherwise it might be difficult for English-speaking readers to distinguish Japanese surnames from first names. In addition, as many English loan words are used in the contemporary Japanese language, when words of English origin appear, I write them in the English spelling.

For English language readers, I attach a glossary of romanised Japanese terms appearing in this study in alphabetical order, followed by the original Japanese words and a brief explanation of their meaning.

## Glossary

**burikko** (ぶりっ子): ‘posing’ girls such as ‘idol singers’ who always try to ‘act cute’

**classic kissa** (クラシック喫茶): a type of coffee shop in Japan where classical music can be heard from a hi-fi audio system in silence whilst drinking beverages

**cos-play** (コスプレ): the abbreviated form of ‘costume play’, which refers to fans of rock bands in Japan who started up in imitation of bands’ gaudy costumes, make-up and hair styles

**cos tomo** (コス友): the abbreviated form of ‘*tomodachi* [friends] in the costume playing network’

**enka** (演歌): traditional Japanese popular song, usually concerning sad stories about the separation of adult lovers

**Gakushû-shidô-yôryô** (学習指導要領): National Curriculum Standard for elementary, junior high and high schools in Japan, published by Monbukagakushô

**folk song** [*fôku songu*] (フォークソング): Western and Western-style folk songs, generally including guitar accompaniment and composed and performed in the style of artists of the 1960s and 1970s such as Bob Dylan, Joan Baez and Peter, Paul and Mary.

**hōgaku** (邦楽): Western-style popular music made in Japan

**honnetalk** (本音トーク): to confess one's real thoughts in everyday conversation

**hyōgenkei-no-otaku** (表現系のおたく): the same as ‘yaoi girls’ (see below)

**indicchi** (インディッチ): ‘indie’ rock/pop fans who inconstantly follow several well-known indie bands at the same time

**karaoke** (カラオケ): singing with a taped orchestral or band accompaniment

**kawaii (culture)** (かわいい): ‘twee’- and ‘cute’- oriented culture among young Japanese girls

**kawa-jum** (皮ジャン): leather jacket liked by rock musicians

**Kayōkyoku** (歌謡曲): Japanese mainstream popular songs before the early 1990s

**kikokusei** (帰国生): school children who have returned from abroad

**kôkôsei** (高校生): high school pupils

**kurabu katsudô** (クラブ活動): extra-curricular activity

**Monbushô** (文部省); **Monbukagakushô** (文部科学省): The then Ministry of Education in Japan changed its name to the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology from January 2001

**otaku** (おたく): ‘nerd’ and asocial enthusiasts, with negative connotations, who have an exclusive interest in their own preferences

**ryôsai kenbo** (良妻賢母): Japanese ideal of womanly virtue, of being ‘a good wife and wise mother’

**shôjo-manga** (少女マンガ): comics for girls

**shôka** (唱歌): school songs specially composed for educational purposes in the style of Western classical music from the late nineteenth century to the early twentieth century in Japan

**sumiwake shakai** (すみわけ社会): divided island society, proposed by the Japanese sociologist Tatsuo Inamasu

**yaoi (girls)** (やおい): girls who express their ‘maniacal energy’ through drawing comics or writing novels centered on beautiful male homosexuals

**yôgaku** (洋楽): Western-European popular music

**yôgaku-banare** (洋楽離れ): a turning away from Western European rock in contemporary Japan

# Chapter 1

## Introduction: Problems in Popular Music and Education

### 1.1 Background

In contemporary Japanese pupils' everyday lives there is a marked contrast between music authorised inside the school and music enjoyed outside the school. Pupils get bored with, show indifference to, or sometimes take a defiant attitude towards music classes in which pieces from the Western classical tradition are mainly selected. For example, *Kikan Ongaku Kyōiku Kenkyū* [Music Education Research Quarterly] (1987) organised a special issue of 'osowaru gawa no hasshin' [voices of learners]. In this issue, pupils complained about the explicit focus on classical music or *shōka*, school songs specially composed for educational purposes in the style of Western classical and folk music in the Meiji Era<sup>1</sup> of the late nineteenth century. In the professional popular music world, the vocalist of Spitz, a popular band in Japan, said 'Last year, we had an offer to include our song in classroom books. But I was not pleased at all, 'cause we started to play in a band as a result of listening to such kinds of music; we had to do it behind parents' or teachers' backs' (*The Music Master* 2000: 3, translated by myself). These examples illustrate the marked chasm between the school culture of classical music or school songs and pupils' culture of popular music. It would be reasonable to infer that the influence of constantly changing media culture has greatly contributed to pupils' attitudes towards music education in Japanese schools, since pupils' musical tastes, experiences and knowledge have been accumulated through performing and listening to popular music transmitted by the mass media in leisure or home settings since early childhood.

A crucial point is that music education studies has not yet explored how to bridge the gap between musical culture *inside* the school and musical culture *outside* the school. Whereas the former has been structured by the reproduction and legitimisation of school knowledge, the latter has been constructed through the interaction between agents and the everyday leisure or home settings which are deeply embedded in the socio-cultural context of media culture.

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<sup>1</sup> In Japan, the designation of an era is adopted according to a period of the reign of emperor. The era name is used in parallel with the Christian Era. The Meiji Era continued from 1868 to 1912.

Yet there has been a literature on the teaching of popular music in schools for about forty years. In Britain, since Keith Swanwick, Graham Vulliamy and Ed Lee, amongst others, proposed the importance of introducing popular music into school in the late 1960s and early 70s, a number of similar studies have been undertaken (e.g. Swanwick 1968; Vulliamy and Lee 1976, 1982a, 1982b). Furthermore, since the establishment of the English and Welsh national examinations and National Curricula from the mid-1980s to the early 1990s, popular music has been officially recognised and used in music classes (for example, see Green 1988, 2001). With respect to the position of popular music in the curriculum, formal music education in Japan is approximately twenty years behind that in Britain. Popular music has not entirely been legitimised yet in Japanese school music classes. However, despite the fact that formal music education has centred on Western classical music since five years into the Meiji Era (1872) (see Koizumi 1998), and that the National Curriculum Standard<sup>2</sup> in Japan still do not include popular music, individual music teachers do use popular music materials in their classrooms in order to enhance the teaching of music theory, singing and instrumental playing by accommodating pupils' everyday musical tastes (see, for example, Koizumi 2001a; *Kyôiku Ongaku Bessatsu* 1988; *Kyôiku Ongaku Shôgaku-ban* 1997; *Kyôiku Ongaku Chûgaku-Kôkô-ban* 1999).<sup>3</sup>

I should stress that the chasm between these two musical cultures in Japan cannot be bridged simply by introducing popular music into schools, whilst ignoring the difference between acquiring popular music as a cultural practice and knowledge in schools and in leisure sites. It is as a result of this distinction that pupils learn to differentiate between their *private* popular music as 'everyday knowledge' and the *public* popular music as 'school knowledge'. By the same token, it is important to notice the difference between the musical practices of performers and listeners, who involve themselves with popular music in different ways, depending on whether their performing and listening to popular music takes place inside or outside school.

Furthermore, music educators have tended to focus on boys rather than girls as performers of popular music. Both pupils and their teachers assume that boys are likely

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<sup>2</sup> Music education in Japanese schools is based on the National Curriculum Standard [*Gakushû-shidô-yôryô*] (Monbushô 1998a, 1998b, 1999).

<sup>3</sup> *Kyôiku Ongaku* [educational music; divided into 'shôgaku-ban'[primary education edition] and 'chûgaku-kôkô-ban'[secondary education edition]; monthly published by Ongaku no Tomo Sha] is a very popular practical magazine for music teachers in Japan.



to play rock with electric guitars, while girls are inclined to play classical music on the piano. For example, in the photos in the special issue 'Pop music and music education', *Music Educators Journal*, Vol.77, No.8 (1991), pupils playing keyboard are mostly girls, whilst those playing electric guitar are exclusively boys (see also Green 1997, Part II). In order to overcome these gender stereotypes, we need to examine the differences between teenage girls' and boys' ways of performing and listening to popular music.

However, the biggest problem in previous studies of popular music and youth is that, whereas educational scholars have regarded the school setting as a space insulated from other settings, sociologists of youth subcultures and popular music scholars have nearly all dealt with the leisure setting as if musical subcultures bear no relationship to school cultures.

On the one hand, despite the importance of previous ethnographic studies of popular music and pupils with reference to gender in schools by Lucy Green (1997) and Chris Richards (1998a, 1998b), neither investigated how pupils' discourses on popular music may change if the interviewing spaces were to be shifted from school to leisure settings. Similarly, with regard to subcultural studies, as Gary Clarke (1981/1990) pointed out, one of the most important criticisms of British subcultural studies is its ignorance of school, home and workplace settings as a result of its exclusive emphasis on public leisure settings. A further criticism of subcultural theorists is, as Christina Williams (2001) suggests, its disregard of 'ordinary' young people as a result of its over-emphasis on subculturally prominent youth. Another criticism is, as Angela McRobbie (1980/1990) asserted, its neglect of girls and women, and its exclusive emphasis on boys and men. But again, despite the fact that cultural studies scholars have embraced gender issues, initially led by McRobbie, feminist subculturalists have tended to focus solely on feminine musical culture, rather than that of both girls and boys.

In sum, it is crucial for further studies on popular music and education to understand how different degrees and different kinds of ideology work in relation to the interplay between popular music, musical practices and the gender of pupils in various settings including the school, home, and peer group leisure sites. Since pupils are expected to employ various techniques to display, or to conceal their personal

musical tastes, depending on the site in which they are located, scholars must examine in detail the intricately entwined relationships between pupils' discourses and particular sites. A comparative examination of how pupils' discourses on popular music are constructed within each site will help us to grasp the complex dynamics of the interaction between popular music, musical practices and the gender of pupils.

## **1.2 Rationale and Research Aims**

My research focusses on the problems in educational and subcultural studies discussed above, and attempts to bridge the gap between them. The aims of my research are: to compare how pupils talk about their private music, or what I will refer to as their 'personal music' in this thesis, in school and leisure sites; to investigate how pupils' discourses on their musical tastes can change and are constructed according to different musical practices; to suggest some reasons for differences between girls' and boys' ways of constructing their identities through their discourses on popular music.

In order to accomplish these aims, I conducted an ethnographic study of pupils' discourses in school and leisure settings. In this study, my focus is not on music teachers, but on *pupils*, as I consider ethnographic work on pupils' musical culture very important for understanding the meaning of popular music in school from the viewpoint of pupils. However, I would suggest that using only the methodology of discourse analysis in a limited site may lead us to overlook the dynamics of how pupils' discourses are constructed. Rather, I am interested in how pupils' discourses on popular music are differently constructed depending on *various settings*. The discourses of boys and girls differ, as do those of pupils as performers and as listeners, as well as between those in school and leisure sites, since the ways and extent to which pupils become involved in popular music differ significantly according to their subject-positions in each setting. This is why I emphasise the importance of the relationship between pupils' discourses on popular music, musical practices and gendered subject-positions in various settings throughout my ethnographic study.

The relationships between popular music, musical practices and gender in school and leisure sites have directed my attention to Pierre Bourdieu's theory of *habitus* (Bourdieu 1984, 1990). To overcome criticisms of his cultural reproduction theory as static or deterministic (that I discuss in Chapter 3), Bourdieu introduced the concept of

‘habitus’ in relation to a ‘field’. For Bourdieu and his followers, habitus is a constructed form of subjectivity embedded in an individual’s body. Whereas habitus is embedded in each agent, the field exists as the structure behind habitus. Although Bourdieu’s arguments on the field vary and are rather elusive, the field can be understood as a social network, or configuration of objective relations which condition habitus (see Grenfell and James 1998: 14-18). In other words, the field is a dynamic space where habitus is constituted. It is helpful to compare this with the conceptual pair of ‘space and place’ in Michel de Certeau’s work (de Certeau 1984). De Certeau defines *space* as a ‘practiced place’ (*ibid.*: 117). Whereas space ‘is composed of intersections of mobile elements’ and ‘occurs as the effect produced by the operations’, place is ‘an instantaneous configuration of positions’ and ‘[i]t implies an indication of stability’ (*ibid.*: 117). To put this in another way, while *place* indicates actual site, *space* indicates virtual and ideological setting. Bourdieu’s field can be regarded as space in de Certeau’s term. I will use these terms in this study to distinguish school and leisure *places* as actual sites from formal, semi-formal and informal learning *spaces* as a research finding of my fieldwork, which indicates virtual settings or fields.

By the same token, I will consider the relationship of popular music with gendered subject-positions from the perspective of Bourdieu’s concept of habitus, with which pupils’ musical tastes, experiences and knowledge are constructed in the interrelation between school, leisure and home settings as the field. My ethnographic work takes off from the dynamics of habitus in various fields, because it enables the understanding of micro contexts – pupils’ discourses on popular music – within macro contexts – ideology of schooling, popular music, gender and the media. I shall discuss this theoretical framework further in Chapters 2, 3 and 4.

### **1.3 Contribution to Knowledge**

This study contributes to related literature in the sphere of music education in the following three ways. Firstly, by making connections between youth music culture in school and in leisure sites, which have been neglected hitherto in Britain and Japan, apart from Koizumi (2002). I consider the relationship between youth and popular music through a continuum from the formal learning space through to semi-formal and informal learning spaces in order to give a holistic account of how pupils construct

their musical practices and tastes from the musical world around them.

Secondly, I conceptualise three categories of popular music – personal music, common music and standard music – which illuminate questions of the legitimacy of popular music in school. I show that, whereas listeners in *school* tend to dodge my questions and conceal their personal music, listeners in *leisure sites* create their own alternative culture, and are more open about their personal music. By comparing personal music across the formal, semi-formal and informal spaces, I will show how school ideology homogenises listeners and performers in the formal learning space.

Thirdly, my analysis of girls' and boys' different types of discourses on popular music as both performers and listeners, is also a significant contribution to music education research. Specifically, I develop a method, employing de Certeau's concept of 'strategy and tactics', for understanding the relations between popular music and gender in school, an issue which has been neglected by the bulk of music educators in both Britain and Japan. My ethnographic study is a forerunner in this relatively new research area.

#### **1.4 Research Questions**

My study seeks to address the following main research question:

1. What similarities and differences are there in the discourses on popular music between girls and boys as listeners and performers in school and leisure sites?
  - a) What similarities and differences are there between how pupils in school and leisure sites construct their identities through discourses on popular music in relation to their musical practices and gender?
  - b) In what ways do girls' and boys' techniques for conforming to various school contexts differ?

#### **1.5 Overview of the Thesis**

My research is divided into two parts; the theoretical framework (Chapter 2 and 3), and the empirical framework, which comprises methodology and data analysis of my fieldwork (Chapter 4 to 7). Having introduced the theoretical framework and defined key terms, Chapter 2 discusses issues concerning popular music inside and outside school. I critically examine existing studies of popular music education, in particular

the work of Graham Vulliamy, and present British subcultural studies accounts of the leisure site as some of the most important forerunners of my work here. I nonetheless criticise the shortcomings of the Birmingham School's 1970s subcultural theory, and seek to bridge the gap between ethnographic studies of the educational site and leisure site. Then I investigate how ethnographic studies after the 1980s overcome the shortcomings of British subcultural studies. My critical review ends with a discussion of the school ethnographies of Green (1997) and Richards (1998a, 1998b).

In Chapter 3 I contextualise the problem of popular music and education in a wider sociological perspective. I consider pupils' musical tastes, musical knowledge and practices through Bourdieu's notions of 'cultural capital' and 'habitus', redefined in the context of music education studies. Then, I focus on the issue of gender and popular music. Through a critical review of previous literature on popular music and music education, I explore how the sexual division of labour has been reproduced in both school and leisure sites.

To begin the second part of the thesis, Chapter 4 discusses the data-collection methodology, which involved interviews with the help of a mini disc and videotape recorder; observations with the help of a video tape recorder; and written fieldnotes. I then discuss the conceptual framework of the study and present an overview of my findings. From Chapter 5 to 7, I examine features of high school pupils' discursive techniques concerning popular music, and discuss the 'gendered' relationship between pupils and popular music in the formal learning space (Chapter 5), the semi-formal learning space (Chapter 6) and the informal learning space (Chapter 7).

Initially, I focus on how various kinds of ideology in school affect pupils' discourses on popular music in the formal learning space (Chapter 5). Here I introduce the terms 'personal music', 'common music' and 'standard music'. These terms are not genres of popular music like 'heavy metal' or 'hip-hop', but categorisations with which I will explain pupils' techniques for talking about popular music in various settings. Whereas 'personal music' refers to pupils' everyday performing and listening dispositions in leisure sites, the latter two categories refer to the 'public' aspect of pupils' relations to music. One important difference between 'common music' and 'standard music' is that, whilst the former is shared by peer groups of the same generation, the latter is shared across different generations. Only 'standard music' can

become ‘shared’ popular music for both teachers and pupils in school.

I then compare these findings with those from the semi-formal and informal learning spaces. This includes the results of observations and interviews with boy and girl rock performers in an extra-curricular activity in school and a high school pupils’ band event outside school as the semi-formal learning space (Chapter 6). A boy rock listener, costume playing girls at fan gatherings of Japanese visual rock<sup>4</sup> and boy and girl performers in leisure sites provide studies from informal learning spaces (Chapter 7).

I must emphasise here that the concept of the ‘formal learning space’ does not necessarily relate to the school site, and neither does the ‘informal learning space’ necessarily relate to the leisure site. Therefore, I think of a folk song club as the *semi-informal* space (Chapter 6), although it was held in school. By contrast, I put boy and girl performers in a brass band club into the *formal* space (Chapter 5), as their musical practices were within the terms of conventional school politics, and highly teacher-directed. The concept ‘semi-formal’ will be discussed further in Chapter 4.

In each learning space, I interviewed different individuals, in order to elucidate general trends in discursive practices. The advantage of interviewing ‘different’ informants in each site, instead of interviewing the same informants is that it de-personalises each informant, who thereby becomes a collective representative rather than an individual case. I am interested in how specific discourses within each site are constructed through an accumulation of each individual’s discourses on popular music. Such a view is opposed to that of Charles Keil’s concept of ‘my music’ (Crafts *et al.* 1993), which typifies the very ‘individualistic’ perspective of US-American scholars. I will discuss this issue further in Chapter 4.

Chapter 8 concludes with a discussion of relations between popular music, musical practices and gender in each learning space, focussing in particular on a) the three categories of popular music which emerged from the study, b) techniques for dealing with popular music in terms of strategies and tactics, and c) the concept of inherited/acquired musical capital, as the most important findings of this study.

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<sup>4</sup> ‘Visual rock’ is a category of Japanese popular music which I will discuss in detail in 4.6. About costume playing girls of visual rock, see 7.1.3.

# PART I: POPULAR MUSIC IN SCHOOL AND LEISURE

## SITES: THEORETICAL CONTEXT

### Chapter 2

#### Popular Music inside and outside School: Learning Spaces

##### 2.1 Popular Music inside School

###### 2.1.1 What Counts as Popular Music in School

It will be helpful to give a brief history of modern music education in Japan, before starting a discussion of popular music education in contemporary Japan. The Meiji Era (1868-1912) was important both for the modernisation [*kindaika*] and westernisation [*seiyōka/ ouka*] of Japan. After the age of pre-modernisation [*kinsei*] in the Edo Era (1603-1867), the Meiji government placed importance on education in order to catch up with and surpass the European countries and the United States. Shūji Isawa (1851-1917), often called ‘the father of Japanese music education’, made efforts to start music education based on the Western music educational system. His purposes for setting up the National Institute of Music Research [*Ongaku Torishirabe Kakari*, later Tokyo Academy of Music] were threefold: firstly, to integrate Eastern and Western musical elements and make new music; secondly, to educate composers who can make national music in the near future; and thirdly, to practice music education in schools all over the country. With a help of a US-American music teacher and missionary, Luther Whiting Mason (1818-1896), the National Institute of Music Research published a three-volume collection of *Shōgaku-shōka-shū* from 1881 to 1884. *Shōka*, school songs for children, were generally composed on the *yonanuki* scale [scale without the 4<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> notes] as a result of the effort to mix the Japanese and Western scales in a way that was conformable to Western harmonisation. Even in contemporary music textbooks in Japanese schools, despite its antiquated lyrics, many *Monbushō shōka*, propelled by the Ministry of Education in the Meiji Era, are still regarded as obligatory. Besides *shōka*, only Western classical music and Western-style music made in Japan were included in Japanese singing classes, and this exclusive orientation towards Western music in

music education in Japan has continued until the present.

Since World War II, music education in Japanese schools has been based on the Course of Study (from 1947), and on the compulsory National Curriculum Standard [*Gakushû-shidô-yôryô*] from 1958. Until now, the National Curriculum Standard has been revised at approximately 10-year intervals and the latest National Curriculum Standard, started in the spring of 2002, emphasises the following three points: teaching various vocalisations in junior-high schools; teaching at least one Japanese traditional instrument in junior-high schools; and practicing integrated learning [*sôgô gakushû*] in elementary, junior-high and high schools (Monbushô 1998a, 1998b, 1999). Murao and Wilkins (2001) found these reforms demanding for music teachers:

first, because even the traditional Japanese music in the ‘common appreciation materials’ of the current National Curriculum Standard tends to be ignored by teachers; secondly, music teachers do not have the time to learn nor the skill to teach traditional Japanese instruments; and thirdly, music teachers are required to teach computer-assisted MIDI instruments, Asian and African music, popular music, creative music-making using contemporary compositional techniques, as well as traditional Japanese instruments, which is impossible in the decreasing amount of time allocated to music classes. (Murao and Wilkins 2001: 99)

Consequently, debates about whether to teach Japanese traditional instruments in schools or not are held all over the country since the latest National Curriculum Standard was issued.<sup>1</sup>

Returning to the issue of popular music education in Japan, as I pointed out in Chapter 1, there exists a social and ideological conflict between ‘school knowledge’ and ‘popular knowledge’. Nevertheless, it is not the case that the school tends to ignore popular music in the formal educational system. Indeed, popular music teaching has been going on in Japanese schools for the past decade. The problem is that methods of popular music teaching that acknowledge or cater for teenagers’ tastes have not properly developed pupils’ musical and social understanding of popular music. As a result, in Japan, as in the USA (Hebert and Campbell 2000), Sweden (Stålhammar

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<sup>1</sup> For a further discussion of the relation between Japanese traditional music and music education in



2000), or the UK (Green 2002), the school continues to reproduce or even widen the chasm between the musical worlds of pupils and their teachers. The issue of ‘what counts as popular music in school’ is intricately embedded in both pupils’ and music teachers’ everyday lives.

Accordingly, this chapter and the next provide a literature review in relation to my research question: ‘What similarities and differences are there in the discourses on popular music between girls and boys as listeners and performers in school and leisure sites?’ Firstly, I critically examine the beginning of popular music education theory, particularly the works of Graham Vulliamy (2.1). Secondly, I analyse the possibilities and limitations of previous ethnographic studies of youth and musical culture inside and outside school (2.2). Thirdly, I attempt to account for pupils’ musical practices, experiences, tastes and knowledge in terms of ‘cultural capital’ and ‘habitus’ in relation to the sociology of Pierre Bourdieu (3.1). Finally, I focus on the issue of popular music and gender inside and outside school in a critical review of the previous literature (3.2).

First, I wish to define my use of the term ‘popular music’ in this study. In general, ‘popular music’ is distinguished from classical music, folk music and jazz. Whilst ‘classical music’ equates with bourgeois European art music, ‘folk music’ means the indigenous and anonymous music of local people, and jazz is still known as what was the art music of, pre-eminently black, US-Americans. ‘Popular music’ is regarded as musical products that are mainly distributed by the mass media for mass audiences. According to Richard Middleton, the term ‘popular music’ is ‘used widely in everyday discourse, generally to refer to types of music that are considered to be of lower value and complexity than art music, and to be readily accessible to large numbers of musically uneducated listeners rather than to an élite’ (Middleton and Manuel 2001: 128). Therefore, in this study I will use the term ‘popular music’ to imply music which is transmitted mainly by the mass media to a global youth market, and which is characterised by a more-or-less idiomatic form, rhythmic pattern, harmonic progression and melody.

Popular music teaching in Britain has a much longer history than in Japan, going back to the 1970s, both theoretically and pragmatically. Therefore, to begin with, I

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schools, see also Oku (1995).

would like to review the development of popular music education in Britain. In particular, I will examine a series of works by Graham Vulliamy, one of the most important exponents of incorporating popular music into school in Britain from the 1970s to the 1980s.

Vulliamy suggested that there was a chasm between ‘the musical culture of the school and that of the pupils’ (Vulliamy 1976: 27) before the 1970s. His approach to ‘introducing popular music in school’ was embodied in his edited books with Ed Lee (Vulliamy and Lee 1976, 1982a, 1982b). At the same time, he published several articles on popular music education from theoretical and sociological viewpoints (e.g. Vulliamy 1976, 1977a, 1977b, 1978; Vulliamy and Shepherd 1984). These were early contributions to facilitating pop music teaching in classrooms, as they provided resources and background information for music teachers who were not familiar with styles of popular music at that time. For present purposes, rather than evaluating the efficiency of popular music teaching that was introduced in Vulliamy’s edited books, I examine his theoretical legitimization of popular music education in schools.

Vulliamy’s main concern was the dichotomy between ‘serious’ and ‘popular’ in contemporary musical culture. Whereas the former refers to European classical music, the latter originates in part from Afro-American music. For Vulliamy, this dichotomy had been reproduced by means of the educational system as well as by selective financial subsidies and media policies. He claimed that one of the most conspicuous problems in music education then was the label of ‘inferiority’ that was attached to popular music in terms of sets of criteria abstracted from serious music.

[T]he music establishment, in judging the worth of seriousness of music only in terms of classical music standards, has made highly misleading assumptions concerning the nature of other forms of music, notably Afro-American forms whose alternative musical criteria, derived from an African tradition of music, are not recognised. (Vulliamy and Lee 1976: 40)

Vulliamy argued that various types of Afro-American musical forms have to be redefined by appropriate criteria, since they use a completely different ‘musical language’ from that of serious music. Alongside this argument, he presented three

paradigms of music teaching. The first was the 'traditional' paradigm, in which the main components are singing, music history, appreciation and notation. The second was the '*avant garde*' paradigm which focusses on practical music-making and improvisation. Although the contents and approach of these two paradigms appear different, Vulliamy claimed that they shared a common pitfall.

Whilst these two paradigms are radically different in terms of both the teachers' assumptions concerning what constitutes 'valid' music and the criteria of success, they share one aspect in common – namely, a rigid separation of the musical culture of the school and that of the pupils. (Vulliamy 1976: 27)

According to Vulliamy, whereas these two paradigms lay in the world of serious music, the third paradigm, called an 'open approach', started with the interests of the students whose main concerns are with popular music. Quoting the Head of Music of a technical college and comprehensive school which adopted the open approach, Vulliamy concluded that taking seriously the musical culture of students would lead to successful popular music teaching in school (*ibid.*: 28); nevertheless, he later pointed out a continuing insistence on popular music as lower status in education (Vulliamy 1977b).

### ***2.1.2 The Contribution of Vulliamy's Work***

As a sociologist of education in the 1970s, Vulliamy's theory was largely based on contemporaneous 'new sociology of education', which comprised a series of sociological studies of education by younger scholars. It rose in revolt against the late 1960s mainstream, macro perspective of educational research. Its first and foremost objective was to explain the 'throughput' in school, which is to say the process of transmission of school knowledge through teacher-pupil interaction in the classroom, which had not been clarified by macro sociology. The perspective of the new sociology of education was exclusively interpretive and focussed on micro social interactions.

In the early stages of the development of popular music teaching in Britain, the contributions of Vulliamy were remarkable. The significance of Vulliamy's works rests on his application of the 'sociology of knowledge' and 'phenomenology' to music

education.

In response to the epoch-making book, *Knowledge and Control*, edited by Michael F. D. Young (1971a), an advocate of the ‘new sociology of education’, Vulliamy opened up the question of ‘what counts as valid knowledge in educational institutions’ (Vulliamy 1976: 19) in the macro context of music education, and examined the legitimacy of the hierarchy of musical knowledge constructed by the sharp distinction between serious music and popular music in school. The ‘sociology of knowledge’ shows us the extent to which ‘good music’ as ‘school knowledge’ is a social product, and how it is possible for music teachers to redefine ‘school music’, beyond the extant dichotomy between the subject-based knowledge of serious music, and the everyday knowledge of popular music. Therefore, by elucidating the legitimization of a certain musical style by a society, the sociology of knowledge proves that all musical styles have been evaluated, not only according to their musical organisation, but also by their socially constructed significance.

Vulliamy’s popular music theory is based on the sociology of knowledge employed by the ‘new sociology of education’, and in particular, on Young’s idea of the ‘stratification of knowledge’ (Young 1971b: 38; Vulliamy 1976: 24-25). For example, with reference to Antonio Gramsci’s account of the mechanism by which some people’s common sense becomes formally recognised as philosophy, Young suggested that ‘sociologists should raise the wider question of the relation between school knowledge and commonsense knowledge, of how, as Gramsci suggests, knowledge available to certain groups becomes “school knowledge” or “educational” and that available to others does not’ (Young 1971b: 28). Vulliamy used these ideas to identify the process of selecting ‘what *counts* as school music’ from ‘what *does not*’.

Phenomenology provided Vulliamy with a pertinent method for clarifying the process by which pupils’ and teachers’ musical beliefs are constructed in classrooms at a micro-level. Vulliamy applied a method of classroom observation and interview, which was initially developed by Nell Keddie (1971, 1973), to music classrooms to analyse what counted as popular music in English schools in the 1970s. He observed that even when pupils were allowed to play their own pop records in class, a control mechanism of legitimization forced them to listen to it in the same way as they were told to listen to classical music. As a result pupils became alienated from ‘popular music in

school' (Vulliamy 1977b). Through a phenomenological analysis of the classroom interaction between pupils and music teachers, it is possible to explain the gap between the musical beliefs of teachers and those of their pupils. Vulliamy's study is the earliest example of ethnography in relation to pupils and popular music in British schools. Furthermore, through setting micro-level classroom observations in the macro-level historical context of music teaching in British schools, Vulliamy could, to some extent, integrate both macro and micro perspectives in his interpretation of ethnography, and thereby overcome the weaknesses of 'ahistoricism, overemphasis on micro issues at the expense of macro ones, naive utopianism or extreme relativism' (Shepherd and Vulliamy 1983: 4) of the 'new sociology of education'. In other words, to some extent, Vulliamy's embryonic work in classrooms showed a possibility for incorporating historical and social concerns in its method which had often been ignored by phenomenological analysis of the 'new sociology of education' (see Bates 1980: 69-71).

### ***2.1.3 Critical Points in Vulliamy's Arguments***

Although there is no doubt that Vulliamy contributed to introducing popular music into British schools in the 1970s and 1980s, I have three reservations about his arguments. Firstly, as Swanwick suggested, although Vulliamy was critical of the application of traditional classical criteria to popular music, he confused conceptual distinctions between general aesthetic theories, and critical accounts of particular music and value systems; therefore he did not succeed in differentiating between classical and popular music appropriately (Swanwick 1984: 52). Some weaknesses in Vulliamy's theorisation were also pointed out by Green (1988: 62). He was right to warn about the over-emphasis on classically-oriented criteria in music education in 1970s Britain, but his procedures for analysing classical and popular music actually served to maintain the predominance of the former over the latter. This point relates to my next criticism of his argument.

Secondly, I would suggest that Vulliamy's relativism led him into the trap of dismissing the social context of popular music. His rather optimistic view of the 'relativity of aesthetic judgements' (Vulliamy 1976: 29) led him to assume pupils' and teachers' equal receptivity to all musical styles.

To concentrate solely on varieties of pop music to the exclusion of other types of music would be as educationally limiting as the reverse procedure where pop music is entirely rejected. The process of musical education should be concerned with expanding pupils' horizons and the best way to achieve this is by encouraging all forms of musical expression without as far as possible holding preconceived ideas about which forms of music are intrinsically better or worse than others. (Vulliamy and Lee 1976: 57)

But is it feasible that music teachers or indeed pupils, will be entirely free from 'preconceived ideas' on music? I must emphasise here that musical beliefs are socialised through various ideological factors and deeply embedded in both school and everyday contexts. Therefore, considering Vulliamy's relativistic claim that 'different types of music require different criteria for aesthetic judgement and any attempt to pronounce on the "absolute" value of music is doomed to failure' (Vulliamy 1977b: 227), I cannot help but feel that all kinds of music can only properly be understood within specified contexts, rather than decontextualised, and apparently autonomous like classical music.

Chris Richards, a media studies researcher, warned that some of the contributors to *Pop Music in School* (Vulliamy and Lee 1976) were more keen than the editors to decontextualise curriculum contents. For example, when Piers Spencer, one of the contributors, compared the validity for physical education of 'soccer as a game' as against 'soccer fan's behaviour as an anti-social phenomenon' with the acceptability of 'Afro-American styles such as the blues' for music education as against 'pop culture' (Spencer 1976: 100), Richards noted that:

By seeking to abstract from the popular domain those forms which can be seemingly stripped of their cultural meaning and reconstructed on the terms which teachers dictate, the teacher was called upon to exert an extraordinary cultural authority. In this scenario, the meanings young people gave to pop, or to football, were to have no place. It was the teacher's attribution of meaning which should determine the way in which popular music ought to be engaged. (Richards 1998b:

Thirdly, when Vulliamy advocated the ‘open approach’, that is, pupil-centred music education, for the teaching of popular music, he failed to notice the varying social meaning and structure of pupils’ individual musical experiences, tastes and interests. To put this another way, he omitted the individual ‘cultural capital’ of accumulated different musical styles, which I will discuss in Chapter 3 in detail. Here, Green’s sociological analysis of popular music teaching is suggestive (Green 1990). She questioned the comparative assessment of contrasting compositions by two girls on a GCSE course. While the first was classically trained, the second was popular music orientated. The composer of the first piece could read music and her piece was notated, and the composer of the second could not read or write notation. Green argued that if the two pieces were assessed in accordance with certain criteria of an examining body, the second popular-music-style piece would have to score a much higher mark than the first. She suggested two ironies. Firstly, whereas the second composer, who was a potential higher-achiever in the examination system, had to stop her music learning at secondary education level, the first composer, who was a lower-achiever, was able to continue her music study at university. Secondly, if we considered the musical literacy skills of the composer of the first piece, certain other criteria might lead to giving her a higher mark to reflect her knowledge and skill, even though the second composer’s piece was more musically successful. Green provided a reason for these disparities of assessment in terms of the differences of input-output perspective:

[W]e tend to aggregate the two types of criteria. That is, we assess both the musical object, or outcome, and the amount of learning undergone by the candidate, or input. In the case of the two compositions under discussion here, an aggregation of this nature would give them roughly equal marks, each for different reasons. This may seem to be a valid compromise, but in fact it fails to reflect any intersubjective reality in the world outside school: for the value of the two pieces as educational and cultural capital is entirely different. (Green 1990: 194)

As a conclusion, Green gave one possible answer for these ironies:

All musical learning takes place outside as well as inside the classroom, all musical knowledge has an a-theoretical, non-linguistic element, and all musical production is mediated by skills and knowledge. It is within the parameters of musical *style*, not in any supposed shortcomings of the teaching profession, nor the posited alienating effects of literacy, that we must look for a way out of this assessment conundrum. The problem at present is that certain styles of music, particularly non-notated ones, are still not assimilated into the examination system. It is one of the shortcomings of this system that informally acquired, non-discursive, pre-literate knowledge can reach the highest levels of compositional musicianship, and yet cannot be adequately rewarded. (Green 1990: 195)

While Green accounted for differences of musical achievement in terms of mediated musical experiences as ‘educational and cultural capital’, Vulliamy seemed reluctant to analyse the process of acquiring musical experiences, despite the fact that he explained the legitimating process of culture advocated by Pierre Bourdieu elsewhere (Vulliamy 1977a: 192-194). The theory of ‘cultural capital’ helps to understand pupils’ musical experiences and tastes both at a macro and micro-level. More recently in Britain, Green (in particular, see 1988, 2001) and Richards (1998a, 1998b) have developed further their theories of popular music education. Vulliamy’s views of the 1970s now seem monolithic due to their neglect of the difference between listening and performing by boys and girls in and out of school. This issue of the relations between place, musical practice and gender are discussed in the next section.

## **2.2 Popular Music outside School: A Critical Review of Subcultural Theory**

### ***2.2.1 Ethnographic Study by British Subcultural Studies***

In this section, I shift my focus from the study of popular music in school to that in leisure sites, in particular, ethnographic studies of popular music and youth outside school. Ethnographic study usually combines various qualitative methods, from unstructured observations or in-depth interviews through to conversation analysis, and is often entitled ‘fieldwork’ or ‘case-study’. While ethnography was initially associated



with anthropological study, Martyn Hammersley and Paul Atkinson defined it more broadly in the context of educational research:

[E]thnography is simply one social research method, albeit a somewhat unusual one, drawing as it does on a wide range of sources of information. The ethnographer participates, overtly or covertly, in people's daily lives for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, asking questions; in fact collecting whatever data are available to throw light on the issues with which he or she is concerned. (Hammersley and Atkinson 1983: 2)

Following this, I consider 'ethnography' to mean a way of understanding people's lives as culture by examining the process of their making meaning within various social contexts. Furthermore, I regard ethnography not only as the conglomeration of various data-collecting methods, but also as the interpretive process and its written form.

For the purpose of my research, I limit myself to the investigation of the emergence of ethnography with reference to the study of popular music and youth. Specifically, as the important forerunners of this study, I discuss British subcultural studies in the 1970s. Some drawbacks of the Birmingham School are pointed out, and then I consider how these have been overcome by British, American and Canadian anthropological and ethnographic studies of popular music and youth in the 1980s and onward. In the latter half of this section, I return to the school site and focus on the ethnographic studies of music in school by Green (1988, 2001) and Richards (1998a, 1998b).

The Chicago School sociologists borrowed the method of 'ethnography' from anthropology in order to analyse youth culture in urban social contexts in the 1920s and 1930s. In seeking to explain young people's 'delinquency' and 'deviance', they formulated the question, 'why are youths obliged to opt for delinquency or deviance in a particular social context?' Howard S. Becker's study of 'outsiders' in the 1960s included one of the earliest ethnographic studies of popular musicians, in the form of the participant observation of dance musicians (Becker 1963). He explained their deviant behaviour by means of 'labelling' theory. In this study, musicians labelled

ordinary people, who had an entirely opposed value system to that of themselves, 'square', meaning dull and mediocre, which in turn meant labelling themselves as 'outsiders'. Becker claimed that '[d]eviance is not a quality that lies in behavior itself, but in the interaction between the person who commits an act and those who respond to it'. Becker thereby stressed the process of socialisation as that which constructs cultural distinctions between agents, and it was this orientation that influenced the first subcultural studies of the late 1960s.

An important precursor of the ethnography of youth and musical culture was developed mainly in Britain at the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) at the University of Birmingham. The 'Birmingham School', as it became known, initiated cultural studies from the late 1960s, and CCCS subculturalists argued that subcultures were the products of young people, by and for themselves.

Subcultures emerged as a phenomenon of advanced capitalist societies in the 1950s. Due to improvements in the labour market and education, the 1950s saw the beginnings of teenage culture, in which young people invested their time and money to create a culture that was markedly different from that of their parents. Of particular importance here is the significance of popular music for the development of subcultures. In the 1950s, the music of Elvis Presley rearticulated musical elements of white and black working-class cultures (see Middleton 1990: 11, 18-21). In the 1960s, the Beatles were acclaimed as a symbol of a new 'classless', 'equal' youth world, because of their integration of a broad range of musical styles.

However, it was the Birmingham School that came to notice the necessity of a theory for the detailed analysis of subculture, and who attempted to describe subculture as a text. Andy Bennett found the significance of CCCS rested on 'its application of a Marxist perspective to the study of youth subcultures' (Bennett 2000: 18), that understood subcultural resistance as a result of class conflict.

[F]ar from signifying post-war working-class youth's assimilation into a unified teenage consumer culture, the emergent style-based subcultures, while indeed indicative of newly acquired spending habits, also symbolised a series of responses on the part of working-class youth to the socio-economic conditions of their class position. (Bennett 2000: 18)

Two of the most important features of the CCCS subcultural studies of the 1970s were their assertion of the importance of the cultural practices of young people, and their understanding of working-class youth subculture as a form of resistance to dominant class culture. *Resistance through Rituals: Youth Subcultures in Post-war Britain* (1975), edited by Stuart Hall and Tony Jefferson, consolidated the orientation of the Birmingham School and provided theoretical, ethnographic and other methodological approaches to subcultures that have been very influential.

Two sociologists at CCCS, Paul Willis and Dick Hebdige, in particular addressed popular music and youth. The former wrote an ethnography of working-class pupils (Willis 1977) and a comparative study between bike-boys and hippies (Willis 1978), and the latter investigated the meaning of 'style' for subcultures (Hebdige 1979). Willis is best known for his monograph on working-class boys in a secondary modern school (Willis 1977). This study explained why working-class kids get working-class jobs by means of interviews and observations of working-class counter-school culture, '...where working class themes are mediated to individuals and groups in their own determinate context and where working class kids creatively develop, transform and finally reproduce aspects of the larger culture in their own praxis in such a way as to finally direct them to certain kinds of work' (Willis 1977: 2). Willis described working-class lads culture, not as subordinate, but as independent, and thereby opposed to that of middle-class pupils, whom the lads referred to as 'ear'oles', meaning flatterers to educational authorities. Willis' ethnography clarified not only how the social inferiority of the working-classes is reproduced, but also how their subculture could become autonomous as a counter-school culture.

In his next ethnographic work of 1978, Willis focussed on popular music and youth subcultures, in a comparative study of motor bike-boys' and hippies' styles: rock 'n' roll and progressive rock respectively. He noticed 'what seemed to be an experiential synthesis between rock music and riding the motor-bike', that is to say, '[f]ast riding was incited by the feel of the rhythm in the head. And in reverse all the qualities of fast dangerous riding, movement and masculinity seemed to be summed up in – were part of – similar qualities in the music' (Willis 1978: 72). Then he elucidated the hippies' fondness for the creativity and originality of progressive rock (*ibid.*: 154).

Here Willis' theory seems to move from a class-based subcultural study to a style-based subcultural one.

Hebdige (1979) extended the understanding of youth beyond class conflict in his consideration of both 'style' and 'ethnicity'. What Hebdige called 'style' in his study was expressed through 'the expressive forms and rituals of those subordinate groups – the teddy boys and mods and rockers, the skinheads and the punks – who are alternately dismissed, denounced and canonized' (Hebdige 1979: 2). A term 'homology', used by Willis (1978), was further developed by Hebdige (1979).

In *Profane Culture*, Willis shows how, contrary to the popular myth which presents subcultures as lawless forms, the internal structure of any particular subculture is characterized by an extreme orderliness: each part is organically related to other parts and it is through the fit between them that the subcultural member makes sense of the world. (Hebdige 1979: 113)

His ethnography of punk understood its style, not as in parts, but as a whole in terms of homology, and showed that young people differentiate styles through signifying practices which render them meaningful, rather than simply following their traditional class culture. In other words, young people synthesise clothes, dance, and music into a subcultural life style that is significantly different to mainstream culture. Popular music is a crucial component of a network of signifying practices that together produce a subcultural style. Willis' and Hebdige's works were influential in the development of audience studies since the late 1970s, which regard young people not as mere consumers, but as producers of meaning through the media (see, for example, Hall *et al.* 1980).

### ***2.2.2 Criticisms of Subcultural Theories of Popular Music and Youth***

One of the most important contributions of CCCS subcultural theory in the 1970s to popular music studies is that, by adopting ethnographic methods, it created a new possibility for describing youth musical subculture as a process of producing social meaning valued by young people. However, there are limitations in the works of both Willis and Hebdige. Although British subcultural studies in the 1970s still influence

contemporary cultural studies, later ethnographic works on youth musical subculture start by evaluating and criticising them, and McRobbie (1980/1990), Clark (1981/1990), Thornton (1995) and Bennett (2000) are all particularly helpful in this respect. For the purpose of my study, I examine the shortcomings of British subcultural studies in the 1970s from three perspectives; firstly, the dichotomies between class and cultural analysis; secondly, the neglect of female teenagers; and thirdly, the over-emphasis on leisure sites.

Firstly, the existent dichotomies of working-class/middle-class and/or the mainstream/subculture in subcultural theory should be discussed. Bennett (2000) questioned the ahistoricism of class-centred theories, because they applied the arguments on working-class youth in the post-war period as to later youth cultures. Furthermore, CCCS theorists' assumption of a clear difference between resistant working-class pupils and obedient middle-class pupils was over simple (e.g. Willis 1977). Also, the subculturalists distinguished their informants from adolescents who did not belong to prominent subcultures, and failed to consider *ordinary* young people. It was often the case that scholars themselves belonged to elitist subcultures, the members of which could be distinguished from mediocre others. Although admitting that Hebdige (1979) emancipated subculture from an exclusive emphasis on class and re-read it as style, Gary Clarke criticised him on account of his over-emphasis on punk, from the viewpoint of the elitist art-school avant-garde culture to which Hebdige himself belonged, which caused him to despise ordinary teenagers, by drawing a strict line between those who *had* style and those who *did not* (Clarke 1981/1990: 84-85).

The sense of belonging to a particular subculture brings about what Sarah Thornton calls an 'us-them binarism' (Thornton 1995: 95). Thornton emphasises the binarism, i.e. the mainstream/subculture or working-class/middle-class dichotomies in subcultural theory. She identified three academic divisions of youth culture; a) 'dominant culture & bourgeois ideology/subculture by deviant vanguard'; b) 'mass culture & commercial ideology/subculture by deviant vanguard'; c) 'mass culture & commercial ideology/student culture by educated vanguard' (*ibid.*: 96-97). These conflicts can change according to which side subculturalists identify with. In Thornton's analysis of the academic divides of youth culture by subculturalists, she found multi-layered misunderstandings of the relations between the mainstream and

the alternative in terms of class, mass culture and commercial ideology, cultural elitism and deviance theory:

[T]he main strands of thought on the social structure of youth amongst these British scholars contradict one another. One positions the mainstream as a middle-class, 'dominant' culture, while the other describes it as a working-class, 'mass' culture. Some, then, see the alternative as (middle-class) student culture, others as (working-class) subculture....Moreover, each tradition has tended to subsume, rather than properly deal with, the contradictions raised by the other. (Thornton 1995: 96)

This first flaw of British subcultural studies seems to derive from an ignorance of the majority of ordinary young people who did not belong to a prominent subculture, because the subculturalists were only concerned with the producers of explicit subcultures *par excellence* among general youth. In Bennett's words, 'the attempt to identify "authentic" subcultural responses involving musical and stylistic resources' has led 'to question the validity of the term "subculture" itself' (Bennett 2000: 24). This ignorance of ordinary young people connects to the second and third flaws of British subcultural studies, that is, the exclusion of female teenagers from subcultures and the exclusive focus on leisure sites.

One of the CCCS scholars, Angela McRobbie, was amongst the first to accuse other subculturalists of their male dominance. She complained that the relationship between girls and boys had not been considered, let alone the silence of female teenagers. McRobbie and Garber's study (1975) on the 'romance culture' of female working-class girls, as produced in their bedrooms around a dream of marriage in order to become independent from parents, was a notable exception to British subcultural studies in the early stages.

McRobbie mainly criticised the works of Willis (1977) and Hebdige (1979), which, as she pointed out, gave a one-sided description of working-class lads' sexism:

Hebdige's usage of 'style' structurally excludes women. This is ironic, for in 'straight' terms it is accepted as primarily a female or feminine interest. What's

more, women are so obviously inscribed (marginalized, abused) within subcultures as static objects (girlfriends, whores, or 'faghags') that access to its thrills – to hard, fast rock music, to drugs, alcohol, and 'style' – would hardly be compensation even for the most adventurous teenage girl. The signs and codes subverted and reassembled in the 'semiotic guerilla warfare' conducted through style don't really speak to women at all. The attractions of a subculture – its fluidity, the shifts in the minutiae of its styles, the details of its combative *bricolage* – are offset by an unchanging and exploitative view of women. (McRobbie 1980/1990: 73)

According to McRobbie, parents' restrictions forced teenage girls to stay in restricted settings such as the home or local dance clubs, which were considered 'safer' than the male-dominated places that were the exclusive concern of the subculturalists.

The most problematic argument here, as Bennett pointed out, is the term 'subculture' itself (Bennett 2000: 24). Later scholars needed to emancipate the term from its male-dominated connection by subculturalists of the 1970s. Thornton (1995) for example, defined subcultures as largely constructed through the representational power of the media. In this study, I attempt to redefine the term 'subculture' with reference to the issue of place and space, because I have found that the first and foremost critical task of contemporary ethnographers is to bridge the gap between leisure and school sites, as I discussed in Chapter 1.

The third flaw of subcultural theory is its over-emphasis on the leisure site, which could be considered as one reason for its neglect of girls. As far as I know, it was only Clarke (1981/1990) who clearly pointed out the lack of any bridge between leisure sites and any other places in British subcultural studies. This lack made it impossible for the scholars of CCCS to holistically analyse the process by which young people make their styles meaningful:

The Centre's subculturalists are correct to break away from a crude conception of class as an abstract relationship to the forces of production. However, subcultures are conceived as a leisure-based career, and the 'culture' within 'youth subculture' is defined in terms of the possession of particular artifacts and styles

rather than as a whole 'way of life' structured by the social relations based on class, gender, race, and age. Consequently we are given little sense of what subcultures actually *do*, and we do not know whether their commitment is fulltime or just, say, a weekend phenomenon. We are given no sense of the age range, income (or source of income), and occupations of the members of a subculture, no explanation as to why some working-class youths do not join. Individual subcultural stylists are, ironically, reduced to the status of dumb, anonymous mannequins, incapable of producing their own meanings and awaiting the arrival of the code breaker. (Clarke 1981/1990: 89)

Furthermore, referring to Hebdige's study on style, particularly his analysis of male working-class dress (Hebdige 1979), Clark stressed that the CCCS scholars ignored institutional sites of hegemony such as school, work and home because of their exclusive focus on leisure:

If we are to consider the 'symbolic refusals' contained in items of clothing, we should not be content to read the styles of subcultural mannequins during their leisure time while dismissing other styles as if they were merely bland. Instead we should focus on the diluted 'semiotic guerilla warfare' in certain sites: in particular, those of school, home, and the workplace. (Clarke 1981/1990: 92)

Despite the exception of Willis' ethnography of working-class lads in terms of their resistance to the reproduction of school culture (Willis 1977), I agree with Clarke that the subculturalists' failure to consider various sites other than leisure places meant that the missing link between these opposed sites has not yet been bridged. Therefore, in my research, I regard 'subculture' as a cultural world created by a particular youth peer-group rather than its original meaning as a sub-group of social strata. As my research focus is on the relation between contemporary youth and popular music inside and outside school, and on how school ideology affects the ways in which youth practices popular music, I will investigate how youth musical subcultures appear in a variety of contexts, from formal to informal spaces, and more precisely, from the classroom through to extra-curricular activities in schools, and beyond to musical



events, places for peer-group bands and gatherings of fans of popular music.

### **2.2.3 Ethnography of ‘Ordinary’ Young People**

By the expression ‘ordinary’ young people I mean those who do not explicitly or overtly adopt subcultural styles and practices such as those identified by the subcultural theorists discussed in the previous section. In the following sections, I elucidate how the three flaws of British subcultural studies have been overcome by a series of later British, US-American and Canadian ethnographic studies of youth and popular music, in anthropology and sociology since the 1980s. Firstly, I consider the dichotomy between ‘working-class/middle-class’ and ‘mainstream/subculture’. Two anthropological studies of amateur musicians by Sara Cohen (1991) and Ruth Finnegan (1989) provided a much needed change from the prominent subcultural domination of earlier cultural studies of popular music.

Whereas many sociologists had criticised subcultural theory, the anthropologist Sara Cohen (1993) re-opened the question of the relation between ethnography and popular music studies. Cohen argued that, because of having been applied to a wide variety of disciplines, ethnography had often been misconstrued, and could only be properly understood by returning to the aim of anthropology, ‘to discover the way in which their [people’s] social world or reality is constructed, and how particular events acquire meaning for them in particular situations’ (Cohen 1993: 124). According to Cohen, over-emphasis on statistics, music as commodity, and the small minority of professional performers in popular music studies had led to an ignorance of ‘music in use’ as a cultural practice, and of amateur music-makers. She stressed the need for ethnography in popular music studies, since it is ‘based upon individuals and social groups, and upon their practices, meanings and discourse at a “micro” level’ (*ibid.*: 127).

There seems to have been a tendency to discover ‘amateur musicians’ and ‘grass-root musical practices in a specified local place’ through ethnographic methods since the late 1980s. Cohen herself undertook ethnography by means of extensive participatory observation of amateur male rock musicians in Liverpool, and clarified how their musical practices were deeply embedded in their local identity (Cohen 1991). Another anthropologist Ruth Finnegan described the whole picture of the musical

practices of amateur musicians in the cultural context of a British new town, Milton Keynes (Finnegan 1989). Here her concern was not with youth, but with all ages. One of the most important contributions of Finnegan's ethnography was her term 'pathway', which focussed on the part-time nature of much musical involvement, the combination of a varied degree of individual participation, and the relative and non-bounded nature of musical practices in urban living (Finnegan 1989: 304).

Bennett's ethnography also dealt with ordinary young people in varied local contexts rather than with universal, abstract or ahistorical views of subculture (Bennett 2000). He began by criticising several CCCS theorists' 'lack of concern with the existence of local variations in the musicalised and stylised sensibilities of youth' (*ibid.*: 23). Through participant observation of a wide diversity of groups from underground club culture, Asian youth community, and local pub culture in Newcastle, through to hip hop culture in Germany, he concluded how 'the local' is used as a central point of reference by young people.

In the United States, Susan D. Crafts *et al.* (1993) compiled forty-one interviews with individuals from four to eighty-three years old, which were conducted by students taking the 'Music in Daily Life' course at the State University in Buffalo. This book showed how people find their way to an astonishing range of musical choices, despite the inhibiting constrictions of the music industry. Although this study has been criticised as too individualistic at the expense of the social aspects of musical practices (e.g. Williams 2001), their attempt was successful to the extent to which it traced how individuals relate music to emotional changes in their daily lives.

Whilst the ethnographic works of Cohen, Finnegan, Bennett, Crafts *et al.* have enabled us to read the musical practices of ordinary young people as a process of 'making musical meaning in everyday lives', none concern young people's lives at school. In order to understand the ideology of music education in school as an institution through which the musical identities of amateur musicians have also been constructed, we can turn to recent work by Green (1997, 2001) and Richards (1998a, 1998b).

Secondly, I wish to address the tendency for researchers to ignore female teenagers in British subcultural studies. In 1991, John Shepherd and Jennifer Giles-Davis wrote an ethnographic study of popular music and teenage girls. Their

interviews with Canadian girls concerning their private ways of listening to popular music revealed how they expected music to give meaning to their lives. Quoting Bourdieu's theory of habitus as 'logic of practice' (see Bourdieu 1977: 96-158, 1990), they emphasised listeners' construction of musical meaning. Of particular importance here is that, whilst they considered teenage girls rather than boys, here again, due to their exclusive focus on private lives, subjectivities and historical trajectories, Shepherd and Giles-Davis ignored the school as a place of constructing musical tastes and listening styles.

A series of ethnographic studies on female performers has also arisen recently. On the one hand, Mavis Bayton (1998) pointed out the social restrictions on female performers through interviews with and observations of female musicians; and on the other, Mary Ann Clawson (1999) showed how male performers have more chances to participate in band activities than their female counterparts. I will give an account of both writers' ethnographic work on popular music and unequal gender opportunities in Chapter 3.

#### ***2.2.4 Ethnography of Popular Music and Pupils in School***

Whilst discussing the third flaw of British subcultural studies, I have stressed the necessity for comparative studies of leisure and other sites, such as the school, home or workplace. While the issue of home or workplace as the site of youth's musical practices goes beyond my own research question, I now move on to ethnographic studies of music in school, in particular, the works of Green (1988, 2001) and Richards (1998a, 1998b). Apart from these and two other texts, all of which I discuss in this section, to the best of my knowledge, no other proper school ethnographies on popular music and 'pupils' have been published in Britain. As early as 1972, Frith conducted a survey of the musical behaviour of young people in Keighley, England, and noted that whereas boys were keen on listening to how popular music 'sounds', girls were more interested in the words of rock, and dancing to rock (Frith 1983). Whilst his study remains of historical interest, his ways of dividing pupils' groups into six-formers and lower-fifth-formers, and simply attributing progressive rock to the former and commercial pop to the latter is reminiscent of Willis' dichotomy of working-class/middle-class (see the discussion on p. 30 in this chapter). Furthermore, Frith's

informants were talking about their popular music practices in leisure sites, and they never showed any signs of conflict between musical culture inside and outside school.

Williams (2001) delved into the lives of 'ordinary young people' in a way that the subculturalists could never have been done. School provided a good place to observe 'random' and 'invisible' groups of young people, rather than visible and identifiable instances of fandom and subcultures that were discussed by Hebdige, Willis *et al.* I agree with the following:

Both 'fan' and 'subculture' are problematic terms, but they remain useful if we adapt them so that 'fan' can be used to describe particular instances of engagement rather than a type of person (which implies the existence of a non-fan), and 'subculture' can refer to a certain kind of activity instead of a cohesive social group (which allows a simplistic positioning of people as being either inside or outside the group). (Williams 2001: 225)

But she reflected that when she asked school pupils 'if music was important in their lives, they all replied that it was, but interestingly, they framed its significance in terms of its practical use in their daily routines rather than in terms of identification or self-construction' (*ibid.*: 228), I cannot help but feel that Williams ignores the possibility of pupils' changing their discourses concerning their private popular music according to the site of observation or interview, whether at school or in a leisure setting. Colin Coulter criticised Bennett for his optimistic view of the possibility of people's varied relations to popular music in local sites (Bennett 2000): '[i]t must be remembered...that the thoughts and feelings that social actors have about popular music take place within particular structural settings that influence and often circumscribe their cultural preferences and practices' (Coulter 2002: 142). The same criticism could be applied to Williams's article.

Green and Richards pay the closest attention to school ideology with reference to popular music and pupils. In 1997, Green examined the data collected from interviewing music teachers and female and male pupils in English comprehensive schools, and concluded that girls were seen to excel in areas such as singing and classical music, whereas boys were thought to be talented both in composing and

popular music. In 2001, she interviewed fourteen popular musicians aged from fifteen to fifty about their informal and formal music learning experiences, and how popular music learning in schools has changed from the 1960s to the 1990s, in parallel with the reform of the English music curriculum, when GCSE music and the National Curriculum incorporated popular music. She emphasised the need for informal popular music learning practices to be incorporated into schooling, such as listening and copying by ear, working in friendship groups, and having free choice as to what music and activities to pursue.

Chris Richards (1998a, 1998b) used participant observation techniques whilst teaching media studies concerned with popular music in working-class and middle-class schools in inner and outer London. With reference to Frith's Keighley survey (Frith 1983), Richards criticised his over-simplification of the dichotomy between working-class and middle-class pupils in the school. Richards' discovery of remarkable differences between girls' and boys' ways of dealing with popular music in classroom projects is the most important forerunner to my ethnographic study.

Nevertheless, I have reservations about his method of discourse analysis. Although it is true that Richards succeeded in transcending the subculturalists' over-simplification of the relation between class and music, the concepts of 'taste in use' through 'language in use' cannot explain whether or how pupils' musical tastes change according to various settings. Richards fell into the trap of assuming that pupils' discourse in the classroom necessarily corresponds to their musical tastes, or a problem that can be surmounted by using discrete observations and interviews in both classroom contexts and other settings, particularly in leisure sites.

### ***2.2.5 The Significance of Ethnography for Music Education Studies***

Ethnography can benefit music education studies in two ways. Firstly, ethnography reveals the school to be a place of socio-cultural practices rather than a functional black box. By viewing school as one important aspect of youth culture, we will be able to decode the ideological features of the school as an institution. Only when the school is discussed from a socio-cultural perspective, can we understand its nature in comparison to other fields, such as the home, and peer or media cultural networks. Secondly, ethnography will enable us to examine the interactions between music

teachers and pupils as well as among pupils in classroom. My study will deal with how pupils' discourses on popular music can change according to various settings. Ethnography, both inside and outside school, will provide vital insights into the interactive negotiations which are used by pupils in diverse contexts.

What kind of musical taste or knowledge is legitimised in Japanese music classrooms? My ethnographic study shows a consensus among music teachers and pupils that only Western-style classical music (composed by the likes of Mozart and Beethoven or Japanese 'serious' composers such as Rentarô Taki and Kôsaku Yamada), school songs [*shôka*] and a certain kind of popular, or what I prefer to call 'standard music', are regarded as 'legitimate school knowledge'. I understand 'standard music' as a repertoire that has survived beyond a temporary vogue, and which has been reproduced by successive generations. Standard music exists alongside other categories of popular music in schools (see Koizumi 2002). 'Knowledge' is a social construct, and school knowledge is a product of teachers' and pupils' interactions. Pupils employ various techniques of 'negotiation' in various sites including school, in accordance with their cultural capital, subject positions and personal and social identities. In the next chapter, I will discuss pupils' musical practices, tastes and knowledge with reference to Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital.

## Chapter 3

### Popular Music, Musical Practice and Gender

#### 3.1 Cultural Capital and the Mode of Acquisition: Redefining Bourdieu's Theory in Music Education Studies

##### 3.1.1 *Bourdieu's Theory of the Sociology of Education and Culture*

Chapter 2 indicated that what counts as popular music in school must be investigated through ethnographic work inside and outside school. I now want to consider how popular music is used by pupils in and out of school, in terms of various ways of acquiring particular musical knowledge, with reference to Bourdieu's sociology of education and culture.

Before introducing Bourdieu's keywords such as cultural capital or habitus, three primary terms – culture, knowledge and taste – need to be defined briefly. Although the term 'culture' is elusive, in this thesis, I think of it as meaning 'a multi-layered complex of social practices and intellectual activities'. I use 'knowledge' to imply 'objectifications of experiences and beliefs, articulated through the act of recognising things'. By 'taste' I mean the ability to distinguish one style from others, and to judge or criticise what is good, beautiful or bad. Bourdieu regarded taste also as a disposition towards particular cultural practices or products (Bourdieu 1984). Of particular importance here is that knowledge and taste are intended to be understood as social constructs in particular cultures. I am concerned, therefore, to clarify the process by which knowledge and taste are constructed in intra- and extra-school cultural contexts. In this section, I focus on Bourdieu's theory of cultural reproduction and cultural capital, which can be reinterpreted for music education studies to explain the ways in which pupils acquire musical knowledge and taste.

Bourdieu's work ranges from anthropological studies in the 1960s to political arguments in the 1990s. I limit myself to investigating his work on education and culture. Whereas the former gave rise to cultural reproduction theory (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977), the latter was developed with reference to the term 'cultural capital' (Bourdieu 1984). In Bourdieu and Passeron (1977), Bourdieu showed how ideologies of education disguise the unequal transmission of legitimised school knowledge. One of the most significant contributions of Bourdieu's sociology to educational research is

his understanding of the educational system as a means of cultural reproduction. By emphasising the ideological function of education as a legitimating institution in modern society, Bourdieu questioned the school's mechanisms for reproducing cultural knowledge. His main concern as an anthropologist in the late 1950s was to elucidate the mechanisms of cultural construction in society. In the late 1960s, he came to notice that, although the educational system purported to provide equal opportunities for all people regardless of their social origins, there still existed inequality between children of the *dominant* class and those of the *dominated* class in French schools. He then attempted to explain why the relative failure of working-class compared to middle-class children persists in schools by means of his theory of cultural reproduction.

'Cultural reproduction' generates the enduring inequality of class structures. Bourdieu, in collaboration with Jean-Claude Passeron, argued that the schooling system is a legitimating apparatus for reproducing the privileges of the dominant class both socially and culturally (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977). Since economic and social heredity, that is the inheritance of monetary property and social network or status, is legally controlled in our society, people from the dominant class have to pass on their economic, social and cultural capital to their offspring. The educational system, for Bourdieu, is one of the most effective means for the social and cultural reproduction of privilege, since the pedagogic agency is considered to have 'relative autonomy', separated as it is from the economic market. Therefore the school acts on behalf of the ruling class to reproduce the inequality between possessed and dispossessed, which it presents in terms of the 'cultural arbitrariness' of the imposition itself, and of the content, as educational knowledge, on other classes. What Bourdieu meant by the term 'cultural arbitrariness' is that a particular system can legitimate its educational practice without objectifying its social conditions. Bourdieu concluded that, insofar as other classes do not see through the arbitrariness of the educational institution, the mechanism of unequal reproduction in the schooling system can function as a tool for legitimating selection (*ibid.*: 3-68).

Bourdieu broadened his attention from the sociology of education to the sociology of culture. His exploration of the relation between social reproduction and cultural reproduction led him to investigate the relations between school and domestic education. Analysing the data of annual attendance rates for museums, according to



both occupational categories and educational qualifications, Bourdieu pointed out the importance of previous experience of the arts in family settings before learning about them in school:

[T]he action of the educational system can attain full effectiveness only to the extent that it bears upon individuals who have been previously granted a certain familiarity with the world of art by their family upbringing. Indeed, it would seem that the action of the school, whose effect is unequal (if only from the point of view of duration) among children from different social classes, and whose success varies considerably among those upon whom it has an effect, tends to reinforce and to consecrate by its sanctions the initial inequalities. (Bourdieu 1973: 79)

Bourdieu concluded that: '[b]y doing away with giving explicitly to everyone what it implicitly demands of everyone, the educational system demands of everyone alike that they have what it does not give' (Bourdieu 1973: 80). In order to reveal the mechanics of the unequal distribution of cultural knowledge, he introduced the concept of 'capital' in the cultural field. Bourdieu employed this term as a new compound concept of '*cultural capital*', meaning the cultural competence or fortune possessed by individuals, and inherited through the family and class.

Capital is accumulated labor...which, when appropriated on a private, i.e., exclusive, basis by agents or groups of agents, enables them to appropriate social energy in the form of reified or living labor. It is a *vis insita*, a force inscribed in objective or subjective structures, but it is also a *lex insita*, the principle underlying the immanent regularities of the social world. (Bourdieu 1986: 241)

In *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (1984), Bourdieu extended his theory of cultural taste as 'cultural capital' through analysing the results of a large-scale survey of everyday French lives. Now he explained the process of the 'differentiation' of people's tastes by means of the terms *cultural capital* and *habitus*. These terms have enabled sociologists of music to provide the reason for the disproportionate emphasis on classical music in school from the viewpoint of cultural

reproduction. Meanwhile, Bourdieu's theory of cultural distinction has shed light on the segmentation of genres of popular music by youth (e.g. Frith 1996; Green 1984; Richards 1998a, 1998b; Thornton 1995; Vulliamy 1977a).

In a nutshell, Bourdieu's *Distinction* proposes that cultural tastes function as an efficacious divider to reproduce the boundaries between classes. To borrow his own phrase; '[t]aste classifies, and it classifies the classifier. Social subjects, classified by their classifications, distinguish themselves by the distinctions they make...in which their position in the objective classifications is expressed or betrayed' (Bourdieu 1984: 6). His contribution lies in his abolition of 'the sacred frontier which makes legitimate culture a separate universe, in order to discover the intelligible relations which unite apparently incommensurable "choices", such as preferences in music and food, painting and sport, literature and hairstyle' (*ibid.*: 6).

### ***3.1.2 The Significance of Bourdieu's Sociology***

Despite the fact that there are many aspects of Bourdieu's cultural theory which require further discussion, I wish to divide the crucial points of his sociology of culture into the following two issues: the relations between three forms of capital; and the form of acquisition of cultural capital.

Bourdieu assumed three forms of capital: economic, social and cultural capital. 'The forms of capital' (1986) explains in detail the conversions and transformations between these three forms of capital. Whereas economic capital means monetary property, social and cultural capital function at a *symbolic* level. Social capital is linked to the 'possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition – or in other words, to membership in a group' (Bourdieu 1986: 248). Such networks of connections are the product of investment strategies, intended to reproduce lasting relationships that can secure material or symbolic profits for the dominant class. By contrast, cultural capital is produced mainly in the domestic and educational fields. Bourdieu stressed that social and cultural capital can be derived from economic capital but only with great effort of transformation. The interplay among these three forms of capital is explored in the latter part of this article; for present purposes, I shall confine my focus to the issue of cultural capital.

Bourdieu (1986) explored a rather abstract concept of ‘cultural capital’ in *Distinction* (1984), and suggested that cultural capital can exist in three forms, namely, an *embodied* state, an *objectified* state, and an *institutionalized* state (*ibid.*: 243). According to Bourdieu, cultural capital in the *embodied* state takes the form of enduring dispositions of mind and body, that have unconsciously accumulated in the domestic space since early childhood. Insofar as it costs a great deal of time and personal investment to develop, cultural capital in the embodied state is closely connected with his term ‘habitus’.

Habitus is ‘an acquired system of generative schemes objectively adjusted to the particular conditions in which it is constituted’ (Bourdieu 1977: 95). As its Latin etymology suggests, ‘habitus’ means those habitual dispositions or practices that are acquired in everyday life. Rather than implying ‘habitus’ as personal taste or competence which is possessed by an individual and decontextualised from social-historical settings, Bourdieu used the term to suggest the trajectory of individual *and* collective history (see Bourdieu 1990): ‘[t]he habitus is not only a structuring structure, ...but also a structured structure’ (Bourdieu 1984: 170). I will return to this point.

Cultural capital in the *objectified* state takes the form of material objects and media, such as collections of paintings or musical instruments, that produce their effects only in relationship with cultural capital in the embodied form. Cultural capital in the objectified state in the domestic setting has an ‘Arrow effect’, meaning that all the cultural goods of the child’s environment ‘exert an educative effect by their mere existence’ (Bourdieu 1986: 255 n°7). Finally, cultural capital in the *institutionalized* state means academic qualifications legitimated by a socially recognised educational institution. Because of the visibility and apparent ‘relative autonomy’ of the educational system, cultural capital in this institutionalized form is more secure than that in other forms.

In his presentation of the three forms of cultural capital, Bourdieu emphasises that:

[T]he most powerful principle of the symbolic efficacy of cultural capital no doubt lies in the logic of its transmission. On the one hand, the process of appropriating objectified cultural capital and the time necessary for it to take

place mainly depend on the cultural capital embodied in the whole family – through (among other things) the generalized Arrow effect and all forms of implicit transmission. On the other hand, the initial accumulation of cultural capital, the precondition for the fast, easy accumulation of every kind of useful cultural capital, starts at the outset, without delay, without wasted time, only for the offspring of families endowed with strong cultural capital; in this case, the accumulation period covers the whole period of socialization. It follows that the transmission of cultural capital is no doubt the best hidden form of hereditary transmission of capital, and it therefore receives proportionately greater weight in the system of reproduction strategies, as the direct, visible forms of transmission tend to be more strongly censored and controlled. (*ibid.*: 246)

This emphasis on the mode of acquisition of cultural capital is the second important point of Bourdieu's sociology of culture. In *Distinction* (1984), he presented two modes of acquisition of cultural capital, the 'scholastic' mode and the 'charismatic' mode. Whereas the former, or 'acquired capital' (an alternative term he uses for it) is acquired through methodical learning, the latter, or 'inherited capital', is naturally given within domestic life (Bourdieu 1984: 63-83). Whilst acquired capital relates to 'intellectualized knowledge' (*ibid.*: 68), inherited capital relates to 'naturally given taste', which Bourdieu ascribed to the upper class, whose urbane cultural tastes can only be accumulated through domestic enculturation from infancy. Therefore, only the upper class that has economic capital can allow people to slowly familiarise themselves with high-brow cultural tastes in domestic settings, maintaining 'distance from necessity' (*ibid.*: 53-56).

The aesthetic disposition, a generalized capacity to neutralize ordinary urgencies and to bracket off practical ends, a durable inclination and aptitude for practice without a practical function, can only be constituted within an experience of the world freed from urgency and through the practice of activities which are an end in themselves, such as scholastic exercises or the contemplation of works of art. In other words, it presupposes the distance from the world...which is the basis of the bourgeois experience of the world. (*ibid.*: 54)

Other classes can only acquire cultural tastes as scholastic knowledge through school education, but inherited capital functions as ‘the ideal weapon in strategies of distinction’ (*ibid.*: 66) by which the upper classes display the cultural superiority of their tastes. Consequently, it is only the upper class who, through their inherited cultural capital, are able to decode high culture.

### ***3.1.3 The Significance of Bourdieu’s Sociology for Music Education Studies***

How and to what degree, then, can we extend sociological thought on ‘what counts as popular music’ in school by drawing on Bourdieu’s theory of education and culture in music education studies? I would suggest that the most prominent contribution to music education studies, first and foremost, is that Bourdieu’s sociology of culture leads us to question the issue of the interconnections between ‘domestic’ music education and ‘school’ music education. For Bourdieu, ‘[t]otal, early, imperceptible learning, performed within the family from the earliest days of life’ (Bourdieu 1984: 66) is extended by a scholastic learning which presupposes and completes it. His emphasis on the precedence of domestic before school education claims that early, especially classical musical training gives children advantages over others in music classrooms. Even if a family possesses objectified cultural capital such as musical instruments or collections of classical music CDs, this is not necessarily powerful without cultural capital in the embodied state, namely, inherited musical capital. Only when cultural capital appears in its embodied state, can ‘the ideology of natural taste’ be strengthened. Since ‘the social conditions of its [cultural capital’s] transmission and acquisition are more disguised than those of economic capital, it is predisposed to function as symbolic capital’ (Bourdieu 1986: 245).

It may be the case that insofar as the school imposes classical music on all children as a legitimised musical style, children who are classically trained through domestic settings are likely to be more musically successful in school, the result of which is to reproduce the privilege of the middle class legitimately.

When the child grows up in a household in which music is not only listened to (on hi-fi or radio nowadays [sic]) but also performed (the ‘musical mother’ of



bourgeois autobiography), and a fortiori when the child is introduced at an early age to a 'noble' instrument – especially the piano – the effect is at least to produce a more familiar relationship to music, which differs from the always somewhat distant, contemplative and often verbose relation of those who have come to music through concerts or even only through records, in much the same way as the relation to painting of those who have discovered it belatedly, in the quasi-scholastic atmosphere of the museum, differs from the relation developed by those born into a world filled with art objects, familiar family property, amassed by successive generations, testifying to their wealth and good taste, and sometimes 'home-made' (like jam or embroidered linen). (Bourdieu 1984: 75)

Given Bourdieu's argument on classical music, it follows that, after all, school music education can only confirm and reward the musical knowledge already possessed by children.

However, the family and school are not the only places where children are socialised musically. Pupils are exposed to popular music through the media both in domestic and peer-group settings, which latter, especially in adolescence, have a very strong effect on individuals. Interrelationships between musical genres and the two modes of acquisition of cultural capital become more complex than ever before. Now the children of parents belonging to the 'Beatles generation' have direct access to pop/rock music at home, and popular music studies have become institutionalised in music departments at universities and colleges in both Britain and Japan.<sup>1</sup> Although the ways in which elements of Japanese *traditional* music remain in Japanese popular music today deserve a discussion,<sup>2</sup> here I focus on *contemporary popular* music in Japan and explore further the relationship between popular music and cultural capital in particular contexts both inside and outside school.

### ***3.1.4 Some Problems in Bourdieu's Sociology of Culture***

Although Bourdieu's sociology helps to explain differences of musical taste between

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<sup>1</sup> For popular music education in Britain, see Green (2001) and that in Japan, see Koizumi (2001a).

<sup>2</sup> See de Ferranti (2002) for an investigation which bridges studies of traditional and modern music in Japanese contemporary society. See also Satô (1999) for an analysis of J-pop in terms of Japanese traditional scales (1999).

pupils and music teachers, it nevertheless has limitations, especially with respect to popular music in media culture, as I mentioned with respect to the Beatles generation above. I would now like to point out several difficulties which reside in Bourdieu's theory and examine the limitations in detail. Firstly, his cultural reproduction theory has frequently been criticised as a circular argument, since he attributed taste for high culture to the upper class, and that for popular culture to the working class without further explanation. In addition, he regarded the differences of cultural tastes across classes as axiomatic. On this point, Bourdieu's theory has been accused of cultural determinism, essentialism, and reductionism.

John Frow (1987) analysed why the relation between each cultural taste and each social class remained unexplained by Bourdieu's cultural theory in *Distinction*. Frow argued that although Bourdieu tried to explore the processes by which differences in cultural disposition become functional, he fell into the trap of positing a single class experience, that is, the bourgeois experience, as common to the sociologically distinct groups. As a result, Frow continued, Bourdieu was unable to provide the reason why working-class audiences are hostile to aesthetic formalism, or why they prefer popular to high culture (Frow 1987: 60-63). Moreover, Frow refuted the form/content dichotomy, the lack of consideration of media culture, especially television, and the ambiguity of the relationship between educational and cultural capital which were all deeply rooted in Bourdieu's sociology of culture (Frow 1987: 63-71).

The first critical flaw in Bourdieu's cultural theory was that he regarded various kinds of cultural tastes as insulated from each other. To make matters worse, he uncritically admitted the 'priority' of the upper class as axiomatic. His rather static and hierarchical division of culture cannot explain why the musical tastes of an individual can change in different settings. For example, it may be the case that even though music teacher X pretends to be fond of classical music in front of his/her pupils in the classroom, he/she is addicted to punk outside school. We therefore need to redefine Bourdieu's theory from the viewpoint of the dynamics of people's display or concealment of musical tastes as a technique for positioning themselves in various contexts.

A second difficulty with Bourdieu's sociology of culture is that his theory arose from the particular properties of French society in the 1960s and 1970s, as he himself

stated in the Preface of *Distinction*, and may not be entirely applicable to other historical and geographical contexts. In contemporary Japan social class is much less rigid than in European countries, and social stratification is almost invisible in educational settings. A survey based on Bourdieu's reproduction theory and focussed on Japanese college students showed that whereas the incomes of their fathers, that is, economic capital, functioned as a determinant of social reproduction, the levels of cultural capital possessed by their mothers correlated with cultural reproduction (Fujita 1991: 153-204). What was remarkable in this survey was that the economic status of the family had no direct influence on the cultural reproduction of college students, with the implication that any attempt to apply Bourdieu's reproduction theory to other societies must necessitate the redefinition of the particular interconnections between that society's social and cultural structures.

Given this second difficulty, one might think that there would be no possibility of applying Bourdieu's cultural theory to contemporary Japanese society, but his theory has nonetheless made rich contributions (Fujita 1991) and informed contemporary developments in cultural studies.<sup>3</sup> The crucial point here is that Japanese sociologists have redefined Bourdieu's sociology, not from a viewpoint of hierarchical 'reproduction', but from a viewpoint of flattened 'differentiation'. In other words, they regard cultural capital as a means of differentiating social groups rather than imposing the cultural knowledge of the dominant class on others. Music has become one of the strongest markers of young Japanese people's cultural differentiation, as a result of the rapid growth of the music industry over the past two decades. In the 1960s the classical music coffee shop (classic *kissa*)<sup>4</sup> was popular among elite college students, but today, classical music has little value in young people's informal musical subcultures, and schools have become isolated in their function of reproducing classical music *par excellence*. Therefore, re-reading Bourdieu's cultural distinction theory in light of the function of reproducing differentiation is indispensable when exploring the relations between popular music and teenagers' subculture in non-traditional social hierarchies.

The third problem of Bourdieu's sociology of culture is its neglect of gender

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<sup>3</sup> For the application of Bourdieu's theory to the sphere of cultural studies in Japan, see Gendai Shisô (2001) and Jôkyô Shuppan Henshû-bu (2001).

<sup>4</sup> The classical music coffee shop is a place in Japan where such music can be heard from an expensive hi-fi audio system in silence and with beverages.



issues. Although Bourdieu discussed women's life-styles in 1970s French society, his theory did not explore gender issues. Those attempts to consider his theory with relation to gender that have gradually appeared within the past decade (for a Japanese example, see Kataoka 2001) redefined his term 'habitus' (see Krais 1993; Reay 1998). Following the current of gender studies, musicologists and sociologists of music would do well to re-interpret the term habitus with relation to space, musical practice and gender.

### ***3.1.5 Redefining Bourdieu's theory in Music Education Studies***

Having discussed Bourdieu's cultural theory and its limitations, I now turn to their application by music education studies. As Janet Wolff pointed out, '[s]everal writers have found useful the term "cultural capital"...to describe the way in which different social groups use culture as a kind of capital, confirming their social position, excluding other social groups, and guaranteeing the reproduction of these social divisions from one generation to another' (Wolff 1987: 7).

One of the earliest applications of Bourdieu's theory of cultural reproduction to the sociology of music was Vulliamy's explanation of the dichotomy between high and popular culture (Vulliamy 1977a). The problem here is that Vulliamy analysed the difference of high and popular culture in the structural-deterministic way, that I pointed out as the first flaw of Bourdieu's theory. Vulliamy considered cultural distinction as a static 'cultural stratification' and over-simplified the relationship between a particular culture and class, such as the connection between high culture and the middle class, as well as between popular culture and the working class. As a result, although Vulliamy criticised Bourdieu's static view of musical culture and provided examples of how certain kinds of popular music have been legitimatised according to criteria drawn from classical music, his over-emphasis on the difference between classical and popular criteria of evaluation remained within Bourdieu's dichotomy between high and popular culture.

Thornton (1995) coined the term 'subcultural capital' to describe 'hipness' in British club culture:

Subcultural capital confers status on its owner in the eyes of the relevant beholder.

In many ways it affects the standing of the young like its adult equivalent. Subcultural capital can be *objectified* or *embodied*. Just as books and paintings display cultural capital in the family home, so subcultural capital is objectified in the form of fashionable haircuts and well-assembled record collections...Just as cultural capital is personified in 'good' manners and urbane conversation, so subcultural capital is embodied in the form of being 'in the know', using (but not over-using) current slang and looking as if you were born to perform the latest dance styles. Both cultural and subcultural capital put a premium on the 'second nature' of their knowledges. Nothing depletes capital more than the sight of someone trying too hard. (Thornton 1995: 11, original emphasis)

Thornton went on to stress that '[a] critical difference between subcultural capital (as I explore it) and cultural capital (as Bourdieu develops it) is that the media are a primary factor governing the circulation of the former' (*ibid.*: 13). Of particular significance here is her criticism of Bourdieu's neglect of media culture, which I pointed out as the second flaw of his theory. Thornton regarded the media as a kind of 'educational system' through which adolescents acquire subcultural capital. She argued that the '[m]edia are so involved in the circuits of contemporary culture that they could be conceived of as being part of the material conditions of social groups, in a way not unlike access to education' (*ibid.*: 164). Using the term subcultural capital, she described clearly the formation of club culture, as well as the exchange between subcultural and other kinds of capital. It is important to my thesis that she developed Hebdige's style-based subcultural theory and emphasised musical taste constructed by the media as subcultural capital. However, I would suggest that she did not notice the importance of the *process* by which agents choose certain kinds of music and imbue them with personal meanings. By the same token, she failed to examine the relation between subcultural capital and habitus, which becomes essential to my investigation of how high school pupils acquire musical cultural capital inside and outside school.

Whilst admitting that the social basis of cultural practices and institutions was still central to the analysis of the arts in the twentieth century, Frith (1996) criticised Bourdieu's description of the way in which different social groups use culture as capital to confirm their social position:

Pierre Bourdieu's argument in *Distinction* is that the accumulation of cultural knowledge and experience – through education, as part of one's upbringing – enhances the richness and pleasure of the reading of cultural texts, not least because of the pleasure of displaying one's superior enjoyment and discrimination. His interest, though, is in the creation of a taste hierarchy in terms of high and low: the possession of cultural capital, he suggests, is what defines high culture in the first place. My point is that a similar use of accumulated knowledge and discriminatory skill is apparent in low cultural forms, and has the same hierarchical effect. Low culture, that is to say, generates its own capital – most obviously, perhaps, in those forms (such as dance club cultures) which are organized around exclusiveness, but equally significantly for the fans (precisely those people who have invested time and money in the accumulation of knowledge) of even the most inclusive forms – sports or soap operas, say. Such fans certainly do claim, with good justification, to have a richer experience of their particular pleasure than “ordinary” or “passive” consumers, and this is one reason why it is problematic to take fans as ordinary consumers, as models for popular cultural ‘resistance’...(Frith 1996: 9)

While Frith's over-simplistic distinction between ‘high’ and ‘low’ culture seems to be due to his critical attitude towards Bourdieu's concentration on the dominant class in *Distinction*, Vulliamy, Thornton and Frith mainly dealt with musical taste in a static manner, as if it exists only in an objectified form, which effectively prevents understanding of the dynamics of musical culture. An examination of cultural capital in the embodied form, specifically within the process by which pupils make music meaningful, is also necessary. Furthermore, the concept of cultural capital should refer not only to cultural tastes, but also to musical *experiences*, *knowledge*, and *codes* to decipher various styles of music.

Whilst these sociologists have been concerned with listeners in the leisure site, my research examines two types of adolescent in various settings, that is, pupils *as performers* and pupils *as listeners* both inside and outside school. I believe that the theory of cultural capital in music studies cannot be efficacious until we understand

people as subjective agents involved in various kinds of musical practices. Therefore, in Part II, I consider the acquisition of cultural capital through various practices in varied places and with relation to gender.

In music education studies there are, to the best of my knowledge, only a handful of researchers who have grappled with Bourdieu's theory. Green (1984) developed the theory of cultural reproduction in her analysis of examination syllabi of music in England and her clarification of the reproduction of 'what counts as music' in the classroom. What was missing in her study is an explanation of the acquisition of cultural capital, as in Bourdieu's theory of the late 1970s. Richards (1998b) suggested the following relations between cultural tastes and pupils in schools:

A further important emphasis...has been upon the embedding of music in the domain of popular discourse and the need, therefore, to consider tastes in music as features of discourse rather than in terms of a more abstracted relationship between the formal characteristics of music and particular subjectivities. In this context, taste has been reviewed in terms of its tactical definition between situated social actors and thus as a complex rhetorical feature of self-positioning. I have argued, therefore, that the overdetermined enactment of social relations within specific educational contexts significantly complicates the more generalized classification of taste categories in relation to class affiliations for adolescents with access to a wide array of cultural forms. (Richards 1998b: 172)

From Richards' viewpoint, it can be concluded that one must regard musical tastes as techniques for self-positioning rather than as static forms. However, it is crucial to elucidate techniques for self-positioning, not merely by considering tastes in music as features of 'discourse', but by investigating techniques of using musical tastes or knowledge as cultural capital with reference to habitus, or in other words, the embodied form of inherited capital.

I believe that the disparity between 'popular music in school' and 'popular music in leisure' requires a detailed examination which can take account of the differences between each form and mode of acquisition of cultural capital. In Koizumi (1998), I emphasised the relationships between three kinds of culture surrounding pupils: school

culture, home culture and peer culture. Suggesting that popular music can exist as both inherited capital (*habitus*) and acquired capital, I concluded that whereas ‘popular music as inherited capital’ can be naturally accumulated in home and/or peer culture, ‘popular music as acquired capital’ is sometimes transmitted in a distorted form in school culture. I warned that we should carefully analyse whether or not arranged styles of popular music for classroom use are suitable for pupils who have already acquired popular music as *habitus* (Koizumi 1998: 78-82). In Part II, I will expand this argument further by analysing the data collected from my fieldwork.

### **3.2 Popular Music and Gender in Education**

#### ***3.2.1 Popular Music and Gender***

By contrast to the emergence of feminism in other spheres of theories of the arts, such as literature, film and fine art since the 1970s (e.g. Mulvey 1975; Showalter 1977; Parker and Pollock 1981; Doane 1987), musicology started applying feminism to compensatory history, and then to the analysis of musical texts much later. The belief in the ‘autonomy’ of music has resisted feminist penetration, since many musicologists denied the susceptibility of music to social analysis. As Wolff showed by revealing how the ideology of autonomous art has been constructed since the nineteenth century (Wolff 1987), music is a social product just as much as are other forms of art. Despite the fact that music cannot be an ahistorical or autonomous object, the discipline of musicology reproduces an all-male canon, whose status is ‘the norm’, through various institutions including both formal and informal music education (see Citron 1993).

Although in popular music studies, sociologists and anthropologists have been more aware of the importance of the contextual analysis of music, the issue of gender was marginalised until the late 1980s. Barbara Bradby pointed out that feminists have often been suspicious of popular music as typifying everything that needs changing for girls in society, and of rock music as a masculine culture that excludes women (Bradby 1993: 155). In the last decade, the stereotyped sexism of lyrics and the sexual division of labour in the popular music industry have been problematised.

Firstly, I will discuss portrayals of gender in popular music. Frith and McRobbie (1978/1990) focussed on the relation between popular music and sexuality. By dividing popular music into ‘cock rock’ and ‘teeny-bop’, they argued that, whereas the former

equates with masculine hard rock or heavy metal, the latter equates with feminine 'soft rock' especially addressed to teenage girls. On the one hand, '[c]lock rock presents an ideal world of sex without physical or emotional difficulties, in which all men are attractive and potent and have endless opportunities to prove it' (Frith and McRobbie 1978/1990: 382). On the other hand, expanding McRobbie's idea of girls' 'romance culture', they pointed out the femininity of background popular music in the workplace and noted that '[w]omen's music at work, as much as girls' music at home, symbolizes the world that is "naturally" theirs – the world of the emotions, of caring, feeling, loving, and sacrificing' (*ibid.*: 379). Shepherd (1987) elucidated how the timbre of 'soft rock' sounds feminine. As an example, he explained how Paul McCartney's soft, warm and resonant voice relates to the sound quality of women singers, thereby befitting his vulnerable image of 'the boy next door' (Shepherd 1987: 166-167).

Secondly, there is the issue of the sexual division of labour in the rock world. Because of popular music's male-dominance in both public and private arenas, popular music studies has tended to exclusively consider male performers. Bayton (1998) pointed out the paucity of the study of women as performers and argued that material and ideological constraints are crucial to the explanation of women's absence from rock scenes. Through interviewing women musicians in Britain, Bayton showed how 'girls and young women in *all* social classes and ethnic groups are restricted in their leisure pursuits compared to boys/young men' (Bayton 1998: 27, original emphasis). She suggested how female performers may conquer various stages from beginner to professional musician. Cohen (1991) explained how male rock musicians in Liverpool made efforts to exclude their girlfriends from band activities as a locus of masculinity.

However, the studies above cannot clarify why girls tend in general to be characterised as passive listeners, while boys are seen as positive performers of popular music both in and out of school. One helpful route would be audience studies in cultural and/or media studies. The other would be the analysis of socialising processes in forming and supporting rock bands in relation to both boys and girls. I will discuss these two topics respectively.

### ***3.2.2 Gender and the Interpretive Possibilities of Popular Music***

The first helpful perspective on gender in popular music studies is provided by so-

called audience studies as a component of cultural and/or media studies. The study of 'fandom' has become particularly popular, alongside issues of gender and popular culture since the early 1990s. For example, Lisa A. Lewis compiled a book on fandom and gender (Lewis 1992), in which Elvis fans, Beatlemaniaics and 'Star-Trek' fans (Trekkies) were examined in terms of gender and sexuality. It is well known that not a few male Beatlemaniaics are enthusiasts for collecting rare records or knowledge about sound-making techniques in the later Beatles' albums. By contrast, for Barbara Ehrenreich *et al.*, female Beatles fans were a reaction against the narrow sex-roles of girls in the early 1960s in the United States (Ehrenreich *et al.* 1992). In the case of Japanese girls' subculture, Jennifer Robertson (1998) analysed the female-dominated fandom of Takarazuka Revue. Takarazuka Revue is an all-female theatre company in Japan, famous for its heavy make-up and gaudy costumes. Robertson succeeded in describing the idiosyncratic values and attitudes of female fans of Takarazuka, although her focus was not on the musical aspects, but the theatrical aspects of Takarazuka Revue. Audience studies show us how apparently 'passive girl listeners' positively interpret popular music and find ways to identify with it. Specifically, audience studies provoke my thesis to consider female fandom from the viewpoint of the production of meaning through listening to popular music outside school, as I will discuss in Chapter 7.

My ethnographic research concerns 'meanings-in-use' and particularly how interpretations of popular music in school and leisure sites are constructed with regards to gender. Peter Martin (1995) discussed the relationship between popular music text and audience from the perspective of social construction theory:

[t]he belief that music can 'make' us do things or 'demand' certain responses can lead in the end to a version of behaviourism (all the more so because the responses are held to be culturally rooted rather than innate or universal). In the present context, however, it is enough simply to note that such a belief is inconsistent with a 'social construction' perspective. The latter view, in contrast, implies firstly that meanings cannot reside 'in' musical sounds or any other kind of cultural objects; rather they are constructed, sustained, contested, and so on by real people in the course of their interactions...the task of the sociological analyst does not involve the

attempt to disclose the 'real' or ultimate meaning of a cultural object but to understand meanings-in-use: how certain things are defined in certain ways, how some people have the power to impose definitions which others must accept, how established definitions are challenged or changed, with what consequences, and so on. (Martin 1995: 156-157)

Although I have reservations about his denial of the power of music, Martin's notion of 'meaning-in-use' is important to the analysis of pupils' everyday musical practices. Any ethnography of adolescent musical culture must investigate how teenagers construct musical meanings and engage in reflective discussion. Shepherd and Giles-Davis (1991) interviewed Canadian teenage girls on their private preferences for popular music, and explained how it gave meaning to their lives. They used in-depth interviews as a basis for the interpretation of non-reproductive moments in the girls' listening experiences, pointing out that, whereas one girl found the alliance between music and sexuality affirmative, another tried to separate sexuality from her musical experience. Shepherd and Giles-Davis concluded as follows:

The musical behaviour of both Cathy and Diana could, for example, be judged, in different ways, as displaying distinctly reproductive and non-reproductive moments. The point, however, is not whether individual aspects of the use of music and the individual's relationship to the various intertextual dimensions of music are reproductive or non-reproductive. It is that the complex relationship of the individual to their use and consumption of music in ways that may be judged reproductive or non-reproductive, active or passive, conscious or unconscious, is both constitutive and reflective of a coherent *logic*, a logic of practice rooted in processes of biography and their differentiated and variegated internalization of sets of objective social conditions and associated cultural identities. (Shepherd and Giles-Davis 1991: 183, original emphasis)

Although their focus was on teenage girls, their method of analysis could apply as well to boy listeners.

Nicola Dibben (1999) examines the ideological relationships between the



musical texts of popular music and listeners with reference to gendered subjectivities. Her investigation of the relations between popular music and listeners advances those of Martin (1995), and Shepherd and Giles-Davis (1991). Whilst Dibben acknowledges the text's power to control the meaning of popular music, she emphasises the polysemous interpretations of pieces of music for any one listener. The objectives of her study are to show how ideology is made material realisation in popular music and to assess the extent to which listeners are free to produce their own meanings.

Dibben makes a distinction between 'the subject position of the empirical listener, which is due to their personal biography, and that which the music encourages the listener to adopt' (Dibben 1999: 332). She argues that the extent to which music combined with performance or costume, as in music videos, limits its possible readings by prompting the listener to choose a particular subject position. In the remainder of the article, Dibben analyses songs of Gina G, PJ Harvey or the Spice Girls, pointing out how music participates in constructions of femininity. For Dibben, whether listeners accept the affirmative meaning of patriarchal structures of femininity embedded in popular songs or not depends on both intramusical and extramusical factors. She concludes that, although the songs of the Spice Girls, like those of Madonna, allow a heterosexual male audience to read them with voyeuristic pleasure, '[b]y enabling listeners to experience themselves as the producers of meanings and to establish their own position in relation to the system that subordinates them, pragmatic resistance to patriarchal constructions of femininity is possible, even if only at an individual level' (*ibid.*: 352). Thus, she clarifies the possibilities and limitations of listeners' resistance to engage with the construction of certain types of musical meaning. She elucidates how the polysemous musical texts of the Spice Girls held a different significance for subject positions; of male audiences, female audiences and feminists.

Dibben's argument does not include the issue of the *site* in which listening happens. As my research shows, like adopting many personas according to various settings, pupils deploy complex techniques to conceal their musical tastes in public places, in particular, within formal educational contexts. Without considering the dynamics between listeners, popular music and gender in various sites, we cannot contextualise either the subject positions or the discourses of listeners. My aim in this

study is to situate teenagers' interpretations of popular music within formal, semi-formal and informal spaces.

Musicologists and sociologists of music have gradually developed an interest in *masculinity* or both femininity and masculinity in popular music. Robert Walser (1993) analysed how masculinity is represented in the texts of heavy metal. Through analogy with the virtuosity of J. S. Bach's solo instrumental pieces, Walser suggested that heavy metal guitarists express their masculinity by displays of virtuosity, the gestures of which are mimed by air guitarists, who thereby enjoy their masculinities in heavy metal concerts. In order to pursue a well-balanced study between boys and girls, I consider both genders' perspectives on musical practices inside and outside school.

### ***3.2.3 Gender and the Process of Socialisation in Rock Bands***

The second helpful perspective on gender in popular music studies has been discussions of the socialising process involved in forming and sustaining rock bands from both boys' and girls' perspectives. On the one hand, Bayton (1998) pointed out the social restrictions on female popular musicians through interviews with and observations of female British musicians (see also 3.2.1). On the other hand, Clawson (1999) clarified how male performers have far more chances to participate in pop bands than their female counterparts. As I will deal with both girls and boys in this thesis, I examine Clawson's study in some detail.

While Clawson recognised the increasing attention paid to the experience of women musicians in the last two decades, she regretted that such reclamations of forgotten women rockers 'do not sufficiently problematise the "normality" of masculine musicianship, and thus fail to understand rock as a gendered activity. A specific focus on women musicians...may simultaneously operate to reproduce their marginality' (Clawson 1999: 99). In order to understand the situation of women in rock music within the context of the essential masculinity of its musical practices, Clawson conducted telephone interviews concerning the early musical life histories of both female and male participants in a famous US-American band competition. She found that the difficulties of girls' beginning and continuing rock band activities in the early stages were caused by the fact that 'the rock group is initially organised around existing friendship networks' (*ibid.*: 105), and among early and middle teenagers, not

only is cross-sex contact rare without the supervision of teachers, but few girls aspire to form bands. This means that, in order to start their musical careers, 'girls have two options: to start their own bands, drawing on their own female friendship networks, or to cross the border and gain access, as individuals, to male social networks which are the principal sites of skill acquisition' (*ibid.*: 107). As a result, girls' aspirations of becoming musicians are often stalled at the earliest stage, and they have to wait to join college bands where teenagers are old enough to sexually integrate. Clawson also pointed out that boys' 'disqualification of girlfriends from the category of "appropriate" band member reveals the conflation of music, camaraderie, and masculinity that characterises and indeed galvanises the rock band' (*ibid.*: 107). In addition, early teenagers preferred 'male power' group names such as (at that time) Boogeyman, Shark or Sniper, which illustrate that the 'all-male rock band of early adolescence operates as a site for the enactment and acquisition of masculine identity' (*ibid.*: 109), and that these masculine characteristics of rock bands force girl candidates to devalue their musical potential.

### ***3.2.4 Gender in Music Education***

In Japan, although inequalities between classes and ethnic groups are not explicit compared to those of Britain and France, Japanese sociologists of education have focussed more on European class stratification theories than on feminism. It is only since the 1970s that gender inequalities in school have attracted the attention of educational scholars in Japan. Sociologists of education, such as Mori (1992), and Nakanishi and Hori (1997), reviewed 'gender and education' research in Japan and argued that the research focus had turned from sexual egalitarianism to sexual categorisation in schools. Nevertheless, music educators failed to deal with the sociological background until the 1990s, and the gender issue has been largely overlooked up to the present. Despite the fact that school is the public place in which female and male adolescents lead everyday lives, Japanese music educators have long neglected the fact that a number of social inequalities exist in music classrooms. This is partly because of belief in the 'autonomy' of music, and partly because of the illusion of 'equality' in the school, as discussed with regard to Bourdieu's cultural reproduction theory in 3.1.

In the United States and Britain, music education journals began to publish special issues on gender and music in the 1990s. In the United States, *Music Educator's Journal* published a special issue on women in music in 1992, which mainly focussed on sexism in classroom materials, but also introduced undiscovered women musicians in order to encourage music teachers to teach women's music. In 1994, music educators questioned what differences feminism would make to music education theory and practice in the *Philosophy of Music Education Review*. Meanwhile, in 1993, the *British Journal of Music Education* collected together articles on the theme of gender and music education: gender roles, content analyses of lyrics in classroom songs, gender and technology in school and so on. Above all, Green's study of how gendered musical relations are perpetuated by the schooling system is particularly provocative (Green 1993).

After this first article, Green (1994a, 1994b, 1996, 1997) continuously questioned gender and music in education with reference to musical meaning. In Green (1993, 1994a, 1994b, 1997), she elucidated how gendered relations in classical and popular music are learnt not only through musical contexts but also through musical experience, and how musical meanings take part in constructing notions of femininity and masculinity.

One of Green's most useful discussions for this thesis is her analysis of questionnaire and interview findings about gender and music in the classroom (1997). This study examined data collected from questionnaires of music teachers, and interviews with female and male pupils of coeducational comprehensive schools in England. According to her findings, although the music teachers considered girls to be good at singing, performing, listening, notation and classical music, when thinking about their pupils' compositions and popular music learning, interestingly, their opinions were reversed by socially constructed beliefs about the 'sexual division of labour'. Now, assumptions concerning male creativity led the teachers to regard boys as being the more able and creative composers and popular music performers. These views were echoed by the pupils themselves. Using this insight into music teachers' and pupils' beliefs, Green elucidated the mechanism by which male musicians achieve success in the professional musical world, in spite of female pupils' ascendancy in school music education.

Whilst Green's studies of gender and music education are of particular importance to my research, they are limited to the study of adolescents and music only within the school context, and do not concern the influence of family members or peer groups on both female and male pupils outside the school. As a result, she did not capture how female and male pupils listen to and perform music outside school.

With reference to this point, Eilidh Macleod (1999) asked why teenagers tend to give up classical musical instruction during their adolescence, and clarified whose support or pressure is most important to them among the family, the music teacher, and friends. Through interviews with fourteen-year-old girls and boys, Macleod discovered that support or pressure from the family and music teacher was much more important than that from their friends. More importantly, for both girls and boys, peer group teasing was not the main reason why her interviewees give up their instrumental lessons (Macleod 1999). So Green's emphasis on the 'peer-group pressure' (Green 1997: 168) on boys is not so monolithic as to determine their self-image as classical music performers outside school. Because the processes of acquiring cultural capital differ, the background of pupils' musical experiences in and out of school should be examined in detail.

Although Green mentioned the importance of the role of the mother in classical music education (Green 1997: 48-49), she did not explore relations between pupils and family members. According to Diana Reay (1998), mothers' cultural capital strongly influences children's studies in schools. Applying Bourdieu's theory of cultural reproduction, Reay argued how the habitus of the mother has been gendered through her personal history, which contributes to the achievement of her children in school. In addition to this, we must keep in mind that fathers of pupils today may have been Beatles' fans in their youth (see p. 50 in this chapter). Therefore, we should also consider the cultural reproduction of masculinity at home, in the form of the relations between fathers and sons.

The shortcomings of Green's work are twofold: it lacks mediation between school and other sites; and it fails to consider the influence of family members and peer groups on pupils' musical practices outside school. These weaknesses apply to other scholars' research. Frith's study (1983) mentioned in 2.2 examined the musical behaviour of youth in Keighley, England, and contrasted the musical consumption of

‘boys as public performers’ with that of ‘girls as private consumers’ (Frith 1983: 228). He emphasised that whereas boys were keen on listening to how popular music sounded, girls were more interested in the lyrics and in dancing (*ibid.*: 202-234). He concluded that different leisure patterns across class and gender divisions reflected the different degrees of restriction and constraint afforded to different individuals and social groups. However, because of attributing leisure patterns deterministically to social classes and gender, Frith failed to explain how leisure patterns of both girls and boys could change between the school and the leisure context. As discussed in 2.2, ethnographic studies have dealt with gender issues in youth subculture *outside* school, whilst subculturalists have neglected the school as a site of musical socialisation.

As stated previously (see p. 41), Richards (1998a, 1998b) conducted participant observations and interviews, through teaching popular music in media studies classrooms in working-class and middle-class schools in Inner and Outer London. His aim was to consider how pupils relate their informal knowledge of popular music to their formal learning of popular music in the classroom. He found that, whereas girls pretended to be ‘good pupils’, especially in front of the male teacher, and were keen on either affirming or denying their femininity through making CD covers, boys were very reluctant to engage in what they understood to be such childish classroom projects remote from actual production in the professional music industry (Richards 1998b: 119-143). Richards’ focus on the way adolescents talked about popular music is the most important forerunner to this thesis. Nevertheless, he did not describe how pupils adopted various techniques for distinguishing several kinds of ‘popular music’ in the classroom. My study extends Richards’ work by examining how girls and boys adopt techniques for talking about two kinds of knowledge of popular music in schools, that is, school knowledge and everyday knowledge. Moreover, Richards’ study in school did not tell us how pupils construct meanings of popular music in other settings such as the home and peer group settings.

Whilst Green and Richards have opened our eyes to the formerly invisible reproduction of gendered divisions through popular musical practices in school, we still cannot understand how pupils construct meanings of popular music in leisure settings. A comparative examination of how pupils’ discourses on popular music take place both inside and outside school will help to grasp the complex dynamics of

interactions between youth, popular music and gender.

## PART II: POPULAR MUSIC IN JAPANESE SCHOOL AND LEISURE SITES: FIELDWORK

### Chapter 4

#### Methodology, Conceptual Framework and Overview of Findings

##### 4.1 Method

From Chapter 4 to 7, I deal with my own fieldwork in Japan. The nature of the data collection is ethnographic, as I believe it indispensable to explore pupils' discourses on popular music in various settings in order to understand how pupils struggle to relate themselves to popular music in their everyday lives. It is best to abandon immediately the ethnographer's cherished illusion that their informants' discourses will spontaneously be acquired if the observer simply hangs around their haunts. Indeed, it is expected that pupils will not tell what kinds of music they really like in front of adults such as teachers or researchers, particularly in school settings. The reason for their hesitation is clear; whereas the teacher connects to the authority of their educational institution, the researcher is usually a stranger in pupils' everyday lives. By means of ethnographic methods I show how pupils' techniques of concealing, or showing off their musical tastes can change in different settings.

As I mentioned in Chapter 1, I interviewed *different* individuals in different sites. Exceptionally, there were some occasions when I interviewed the same individual in different settings (see p. 70 and 5.4.4). However, the reason why I normally interviewed different individuals in different sites is that it seems nonsensical to repeat the same questions to the same informant in different sites. In addition, I found a way to *de-personalise* each individual. My research focus here is not on each informant's musical life, although sometimes I refer to his/her musical life history in the data analysis, but on questions of 'what school ideology is' and 'how leisure ideology influences young people's discourses on popular music': the ethnographer is concerned with the *collective* form of individuals in each site. This perspective opposes Keil's



notion of ‘my music’ (Crafts *et al.* 1993). With reference to the collection of 41 individual interviews, he claimed that ‘[e]ach person is unique. Like your fingerprints, your signature, and your voice, your choices of music and the ways you relate to music are plural and interconnected in a pattern that is all yours, an “idioculture” or idiosyncratic culture in sound’ (*ibid.*: 2). By contrast, I emphasise that the school is a place of *collective* musical identity for pupils, and so are leisure sites, because each setting provides the opportunity for socio-cultural interplay between individuals’ musical practices and gendered subjective positions through discourses on popular music. Therefore, I use the term ‘personal music’ rather than Keil’s ‘my music’ to distinguish musical practices in a private sphere from a separated and individualistic musical practices which are only attributable to a particular person. I will further develop my notion of ‘personal music’ later in this chapter.

## 4.2 Data Collection

The ethnographic study was conducted in 1998 and 2000-2001 in the Kyoto, Osaka, Shiga and Hyogo Prefectures of the Kansai area of Japan.<sup>1</sup> All the informants were high school pupils with two exceptions (I will discuss this point later in this section). In the Japanese school system, primary education is divided into nursery school (aged 4-6) and primary school (aged 6-12); and secondary education is divided into junior high school (aged 12-15) and high school (aged 15-18). The high school is divided into three years: the first year, Year 10 (aged 15-16), the second year, Year 11 (16-17) and the third year, Year 12 (17-18). Therefore, the age range of my informants was 15 to 18. From April to September 1998, I visited High School X in Hyogo and observed music classes and a school choral contest. During this period in July, I interviewed 7 girls and 3 boys in a classroom and a teacher’s ante room, and 2 girls and 2 boys at the brass band club. In September, I did a short interview with 3 more girls during their music class. When my informants seemed reluctant or hesitant to talk about popular music in the school setting, I asked questions from a prepared list about their listening styles or other musical practices such as ‘What artists do you like?’ or ‘How many CDs do you buy a month?’ In this sense, my interviews were semi-structured.

During the summer holiday, I shifted the site of observation and interview from

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<sup>1</sup> Kansai, the second biggest area in Japan, is situated in the west central part of the main island, and comprises Osaka, Kyoto, Hyogo, Nara, Shiga and Wakayama Prefectures.

educational to leisure settings. In August 1998, I interviewed 2 girls and 33 boys at a high school pupils' band event. At the same time, 2 girl singers, 3 girl performers, 6 boy performers and one of their male friends were interviewed in an informal peer-group setting. One girl singer and 1 girl instrumentalist in this group had already graduated from high school, but only three months previously, and they still belonged to the all-girl band that they had organised in the extra-curricular folk song club. In addition, the data from these two girls were inseparable from those of other high school girls. Therefore, I adopted the data from them in my study. Then, from July to November 1998, I talked informally with 9 high school girls at Japanese visual band costume play gatherings. My observation of informal sites also extended to record shops and gig venues, where I interviewed 13 female visual rock listeners and 1 boy visual rock listener.<sup>2</sup>

From October 2000 to February 2001, I observed the folk song club of High School Y in Osaka where I interviewed 3 girls and 5 boys. In addition, I interviewed 1 boy whose father was a record collector and whose mother managed a 'rock bar'. All of my informants, that is, 44 girls and 52 boys, 96 in total, were high school pupils at the time except the two mentioned above, and all were different interviewees in each site, which is to say that they were not double counted (see p. 68). However, there were several occasions when I interviewed the same individual at different sites, and there also were not counted doubly. Such data drawn from the same pupil in different settings shows a crucial discrepancy between each learning space, as I demonstrate with respect to one girl, whom I interviewed in class and in the brass band club (5.4.4).

Given my research question: 'What similarities and differences are there in the discourses on popular music between girls and boys as listeners and performers in school and leisure sites?', I organised the presentation of the data in these two arenas (see Table 4.1).

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<sup>2</sup> 'Visual rock' is a category of Japanese popular music which I will discuss in detail in 4.6.

*Table 4.1: Interviews with boys and girls as performers and listeners in school and leisure sites*

BliS (3)*	July 1998	BliLe (3)	November 2000
GliS (10)	July 1998	GliLe (22)	July-November 1998
BPS (7)	July 1998 October 2000-February 2001	BPLe (39)	August 1998
GPS (5)	July 1998 October 2000	GPLe (7)	July-August 1998

Boys=B/Girls=G; Listeners=Li /Performers=P; School=S/Leisure=Le

\*numbers of interviewees

I further reorganise my data analysis according to the virtual *three learning spaces* – formal, semi-formal and informal – rather than to the actual *two places* – school and leisure sites, as I mentioned earlier on p. 15 and will be discussed further in 4.4. Table 4.2 shows the three-fold division of my data. Through the fieldwork, the semi-formal space has been identified as bridging the gap between school and leisure sites. The semi-formal space is situated between the formal and the informal spaces, and embodies the properties of both school and leisure sites with reference to knowledge and assessment. In other words, whereas knowledge is legitimised in the formal learning space, it is not legitimised in the semi-formal and informal spaces. In this respect, the semi-formal space is similar to the informal space. However, teacher- and outsider-assessment occurs in the semi-formal spaces, whilst pupils in the informal space are seldom evaluated by people outside the subcultural group.

Furthermore, the difference between the school brass band club and the folk song club is crucial. Whereas the former reified the symbolic power of formal learning musical practices, the latter represented the informal learning practices of popular music in school. Therefore, I distinguish the data relating to the former from that relating to the latter, even though both were collected in school. I will further discuss the features of each learning space later in this chapter (4.4).

Table 4.2: Interviews with boys and girls as performers and listeners in formal, semi-formal and informal learning spaces

BliFs (3)*	July 1998 (5.1.1)	BliSs (0)		BliIs (3)	November 2000 (7.1.1)
GliFs (10)	July 1998 (5.1.2)	GliSs (0)		GliIs (22)	July-November 1998 (7.1.2, 7.1.3)
BPFs (2)	July 1998 (5.4.2)	BPSs (38)	August 1998 (6.2.1) October 2000–February 2001 (6.1.1)	BPIs (6)	August 1998 (7.2.1)
GPFs (2)	July 1998 (5.4.3)	GPSs (5)	August 1998 (6.2.2) October 2000 (6.1.2)	GPIs (5)	July-August 1998 (7.2.2, 7.2.3)

Boys=B/Girls=G; Listeners=Li/ Performers=P; Formal Space=Fs/Semi-formal=Ss/Informal Space=Is  
(numbers in parentheses indicate the chapter and section in which they are discussed)

\*numbers of interviewees

I interviewed ‘boys as listeners in the formal space’ and ‘girls as listeners in the formal space’ in July 1998. At the same time, I interviewed ‘boys as performers in the formal space’ and ‘girls as performers in the formal space’. I then shifted the place of observation and interview from school to leisure sites, where I interviewed ‘girls as performers in the informal space’ from July to August 1998 and ‘boys as performers in the informal space’ in August 1998. From July to November 1998, I attended Japanese visual rock costume players’ gatherings and talked informally with ‘girls as listeners in the informal space’. I continued my data collection from October 2000 to February 2001, focussing on ‘boys as performers in school, *but* in the semi-formal space’, ‘girls as performers in school, *but* in the semi-formal space’ and ‘boys as listeners in the informal space’.

As my study was ethnographic, I looked for informants to support my discovery of tripartite categorisations until I reached theoretical saturation. It might not seem well-balanced that fewer interviewees came from ‘performers in the formal space’ and more interviewees came from ‘boy performers in the semi-formal space’ and ‘girl listeners in the informal space’ in Table 4.2. However, theoretical saturation is based not only on the number of the interviewees, but also on the length and depth of the interviews. In this regard, while the length of the interviews in the formal space was from 50 to 90 minutes on average, those in the high school band event (the semi-formal space) was 15 minutes per band on average. The interviews with girl indie listeners in the informal space were also much shorter in comparison to those in the formal space. Moreover, the relative ease and difficulty of finding informants of each

gender in each space is itself a finding.

Although it was easy to find ‘boys as *performers* in leisure sites’ for my 1998 data collection, I found it very difficult to meet male high school pupils who devoted themselves to *listening to* popular music. One main reason for this could be that high school pupils cannot afford to collect records, whereas, according to my supplementary interviews,<sup>3</sup> record collectors in Japan are at least aged 35 and keep around 500 records. Another reason could be that young Japanese male popular music lovers, in contrast to girls, usually attempt to get involved in performance. The fact that this category was difficult to locate is itself a finding.

The lack of both girl and boy listeners in the semi-formal site was another discovery. As I will show later, the musical practice of ‘listening’ resides in a personal and private sphere in marked contrast to ‘performing’ which is social in any case in both school and leisure sites. Hence, whereas young people were able to talk about their listening style in school, they were hesitant to refer to their own *personal music*, due to the difficulty of their private music being shared with others. In the formal space, pupils could refer to other types of popular music, *common* and *standard music*, as I will discuss later in this chapter, and could even use their personal music as a means of distinguishing themselves from others in group interviews in the formal space. However, in the semi-formal space, listeners’ non-legitimised knowledge is rarely assessed by people outside the peer group. Pop/rock listening clubs might provide such semi-formal spaces for high school pupil listeners.

Despite the fact that ethnographers have increasingly used individual interviews to enter the subject’s inner world,<sup>4</sup> I mainly used group interviews because my research compares how pupils’ discourses on popular music differ between mixed- and single-gender groups. It is expected, as my 1998 data collection suggested, that both girls and boys employ various techniques to conceal their musical tastes, especially in school contexts. The power relations between girls and boys affect these techniques. As I elucidated above (p. 68), I have tried to de-personalise each informant because I am much more interested in how pupil’s discourses change according to particular

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<sup>3</sup> The supplementary fieldwork on record collectors was conducted in Kobe in autumn 2000. However, as the informants of it were aged over 40 and it has no relationship to high school pupils, I omitted it from the data analysis in this study.

<sup>4</sup> Among the previous ethnographic studies discussed in Chapter 2 and 3, Willis (1977), Green (1997) and Richards (1998a, 1998b) are exceptions which put importance on group interviews.

learning spaces rather than in each individual's idiosyncratic musical taste. When I did interview individuals, it was merely to clarify particular points about their musical practices (see the case of costume playing girls in Chapter 7).

### 4.3 Data Analysis

All the interviews were recorded on video or mini disc, transcribed, translated into English and then analysed alongside my fieldnotes. I explain the transcript notation in Appendix B. I contextualise pupils' discourses in each setting and interpret the reasons why they hesitated, dodged my questions, or on the contrary, talked freely about their personal music.

I asked the teachers in the high schools, the administrators of the band events, the employees of record shops and organisers of gigs to introduce pupils to participate in my fieldwork. The consent of participants was obtained orally. The interviewees were not invited to read a draft of the thesis, because, on the one hand, the music teacher was unwilling for me to contact pupils outside school, as he thought that pupils must be under the surveillance of school discipline; and, on the other hand, as my thesis is written in English, my Japanese informants will not be able to read it. However, teachers and administrators checked my analyses which was explained in Japanese. In addition, pupils were informed that they could ask their teachers to give comments on my research and that they could withdraw their participation at any time. I promised my informants that I would never disclose their real names, which probably freed up their responses. With this promise of 'anonymity', they allowed me to use the transcripts without wishing to read them. Therefore, I use pseudonyms throughout, but exceptionally I maintain the real names of pupils' bands in order to respect their understandings of them as symbols of peer solidarity, as a change of the band name may spoil the identity of the band itself. In addition, as their band names are often altered according to the change of band members or of the direction of their musical policy, I believe that this preservation of band names will not seriously invade their privacy. Band members in all such cases gave their consent and indeed expressed pleasure that their band names would appear in the work.

Both tripartite theoretical frameworks in this study – *three spaces* and *three categories of popular music* – have emerged out of the data rather than pre-existing it.

When I started my fieldwork, I came to recognise an ‘in-between character’ of extra-curricular band activities and band events beyond formal schooling, because they shared properties of both school and leisure sites. I named this ‘the semi-formal space’. By using this concept, I have tried to bridge an apparent gap between school and leisure sites. As a result, I could draw relations from the formal, through to the semi-formal and informal spaces. It is possible that the semi-formal space did not exist between school and leisure sites in the 1960s and 1970s in Japan, as rock was regarded as a symbol of youth resistance and pupils were not allowed to perform rock in front of teachers and parents in the formal space. However, the semi-formal space seems to have emerged since the late 1980s with the increase in the number of school rock/pop band activities.

Meanwhile, the three categories of popular music – personal, common and standard music – were also not fixed in advance. Before starting my fieldwork, I supposed that there existed a great chasm between school musical knowledge (Western-style classical music) and everyday musical knowledge (popular music). Nevertheless, through the interviews and observations, I came to notice that there exists a music in-between pupils’ personal music and the standard music of pupils’ and teachers’ generations. I called it ‘common music’, as it is shared among the same generation of pupils. Thus, by developing my own tripartite theoretical frameworks of space and popular music rather than approaching the pupils with ready-made concepts by other scholars, I hope to have made a contribution to the study of youth and popular music inside and outside the school.

#### **4.4 Definition of the Three Learning Spaces**

I have described my ethnographic research as being divided into three learning spaces – the formal, semi-formal and informal. As mentioned in Chapter 1 (p. 15), I distinguish *space* from *place* in accordance with de Certeau, who defines *space* as a ‘practiced place’ (de Certeau 1984: 117). Whereas *place* is ‘an instantaneous configuration of positions’ and ‘implies an indication of stability’, *space* ‘is composed of intersections of mobile elements’ and ‘occurs as the effect produced by the operations’ (*ibid.*: 117). So, while *place* indicates actual site, *space* indicates a virtual, ideological setting. I will use these terms to distinguish school and leisure *places* as

actual sites from formal, semi-formal and informal learning *spaces* as a research finding of my fieldwork. Ian Buchanan explained that de Certeau's space is “‘in’ perception, at the same time as it is what is perceived by perception’ (Buchanan 2000: 112) and that ‘what space names is a relationship’ (*ibid.*: 119). I emphasise that the concept of ‘formal learning space’ does not necessarily relate to the school site and neither does the ‘informal learning space’ to the leisure site. Therefore, I discuss pupils performing in an unsupervised folk song club as being in a *semi-formal* learning space (Chapter 6), although their musical practices occurred at school. By contrast, I think of pupils performing in a brass band club as being in a *formal* learning space (Chapter 5), as their musical practices are not only at school, but are highly supervised and disciplined by school politics.

Of particular importance here is that I regard all virtual settings from formal to informal as *learning spaces*. Learning tends to be thought of as related to school alone, but as discussed in Chapter 3, musical knowledge, tastes and experiences are cultural capital that have to be acquired through socialisation, which necessarily involves learning. In this respect, it is noteworthy that Green (2001) referred to the processes of acquiring the performance skills of popular music as *informal learning practices*.

The ‘space’ in this thesis is where pupils do most of their daily musical practices; it is also where I met the informants as well as where the interview took place. Therefore, even if the interview was done in school, pupils may talk about their musical activities in leisure sites and vice versa. The contents of their talk can traverse across all three spaces. However, whilst the pupils occasionally referred to musical practices in other spaces than that of the interview, their discourses on popular music remained embedded in the setting of each learning space. I now elucidate these three learning spaces.

#### *The formal learning space*

The school is the most important public institution for education in present-day society, and the schooling system is the most legitimised space for the cultural reproduction of knowledge. As discussed in Chapter 3, Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) pointed out how the relatively autonomous character of the school conceals its function as the most effective means for the cultural reproduction of the privileges of the dominant class.



The formalised character of the school, its fixed curriculum, syllabi, examinations and school regulations, authorise it to transmit selected, legitimised knowledge. Music classrooms are no exception to this, the socio-cultural school rule, which is why I have situated the school site at the centre of my ethnographic work in Chapter 5, as compared with the semi-formal and informal learning spaces for popular music in Chapters 6 and 7.

The features of the formal learning space are: being under almost constant surveillance by adults; being under pressure from others' assessments; playing and listening to music not for the purpose of enjoyment, but for the primary purpose of becoming educated and being examined; acquiring musical cultural capital through systematic and scholastic means (see Bourdieu 1984: 63-83). I conducted interviews with boys and girls as listeners and as performers in the formal spaces of the classrooms and brass band club of High School X.

#### *The semi-formal learning space*

In the semi-formal learning space pupils are relatively free from constant surveillance by adults, although still remaining under pressure from others' assessments; playing and listening to music for the primary purposes of personal enjoyment or satisfaction, communicating and interacting with friends and sending messages to listeners; occasionally succeeding in competitions; acquiring musical cultural capital through osmosis, though still partly systematic ways. In the semi-formal learning spaces, I interviewed boys and girls members of the folk song club of High School Y from October 2000 to February 2001, and attended the high school pupils' band event in order to interview mainly boys as performers outside school in August 1998. Although the former belonged to the school and the latter to the leisure site, the musical practices of both were related to popular music and so the informants' discourses were similar.

#### *The informal learning space*

The third, informal learning space of this study ranges from gig venues and costume play gatherings of visual rock fans (see the footnotes to p. 18 and p. 70), through to a pupil's bedroom. The informal learning space represents the 'private' aspect of pupils' musical culture, whilst maintaining a 'public' aspect within the subcultural group,

because the agents' information on popular music is never shielded from manipulation by the mass media and peer networks. In this regard, it can be said that pupils' discourses on popular music in informal learning spaces are constructed through different kinds of ideology from those that operate in the formal learning space, which is structured by school ideology.

The features of the informal learning space are as follows: being self-administered and organised by a subcultural network; being relatively free from assessment by others outside the subcultural group; playing and listening to music for the primary purposes of personal enjoyment and communication with friends; freely taking part in gigs as performers/listeners; exchanging messages through emails, text-messaging and/or notebooks among like-minded fans of pop/rock bands; acquiring musical cultural capital through familiar and spontaneous ways. In informal learning spaces, I interviewed girls as performers from July to August 1998 and boys as performers in August 1998. I also attended visual rock costume players' gatherings and talked with girls as listeners from July to November 1998.

There are two important differences between these three learning spaces: whether or not knowledge is 'legitimised'; and to what extent there is any 'assessment' from others. Whilst musical knowledge is legitimised in the formal learning space, it is not in the semi-formal and informal spaces. Nevertheless, whereas young people are not necessarily assessed from outside the subcultural group in the informal learning space, they are in the semi-formal and formal learning spaces. Assessment in the semi-formal learning space is oriented towards the propriety of school pupils' behaviour, even in the extra-curricular activity or leisure band event. Table 4.3 shows the relationship between two determinants and each learning space.

*Table 4.3: Three learning spaces and their determinants*

	Formal Space	Semi-formal Space	Informal Space
Knowledge is legitimised	Yes	No	No
Assessment by teachers and outsiders	Yes	Yes	No

#### **4.5 Three Categories of Popular Music**

My three categories of popular music – ‘personal music’, ‘common music’ and ‘standard music’ – are not genre names like rock or punk indicated by record companies or music journalism, but are a theorisation of pupils’ types of relationship with popular music. I will now elucidate each category one by one.

##### *Personal music*

‘Personal music’ is connected with pupils’ everyday musical practices. It refers to pupils’ individual, personal and ‘private’ musical tastes, preferences or experiences; or in Bourdieu’s term, their musical habitus, cultural capital in the embodied form (see p. 47). As I will show in the following chapters, pupils talk about their personal music enthusiastically in the informal learning space and sometimes also in the semi-formal learning space, but tend to conceal their personal music in the formal learning space, especially in front of observers or unfamiliar classmates, let alone their teachers who take every opportunity to assess them in school. However, if pupils only concealed their personal music in the formal learning space, popular music in school would be divided into simply ‘classroom knowledge’ and ‘everyday knowledge’, in the form of ‘educationally shared popular songs’ arranged for classroom materials and the ‘personal music’ of pupils’ everyday lives outside school. But pupils conceal their personal music in the formal learning space by complicating the meanings of popular music with techniques for employing other categories of popular music, other than their own personal music.

##### *Common music*

Whereas personal music relates to the ‘private’ aspect of pupils’ everyday musical practices, ‘common music’ and ‘standard music’ refer to their ‘public’ musical practices. The difference between ‘common music’ and ‘standard music’ is that whilst the former is shared by the same generation, the latter belongs to both young and old generations, pupils, parents and teachers. Although pupils have their own personal music, they prefer to talk about other kinds of popular music, that is, common music, in the formal learning space. They cannot share their personal music with their schoolmates unless they find like-minded friends in school, and are likely to

camouflage it in the formal learning space.

A particular kind of karaoke repertoire, sung by all participants to finish their gathering is typical of common music. Karaoke means ‘orchestra [*oke*] without a vocal part’ (‘*kara*’ means empty, i.e. without voice) in Japanese and is generally understood as singing with a taped orchestral or band accompaniment in karaoke boxes or pubs (see Mitsui and Hosokawa 1998 for an academic study of karaoke inside and outside Japan). Karaoke has contributed much to the contemporary popularity of Japanese popular songs both in town and country. The bulk of the karaoke repertoire is shared as common knowledge by the karaoke gathering group. The songs are safe, cheerful and easy to sing, with repeated phrases and lyrics. In 1998, although Namie Amuro’s song was the No.1 hit of the year, songs of idol groups such as Speed or SMAP were far more popular as karaoke repertoire (Dentsu Sôken 2000: 96). This shows that karaoke songs are selected beyond personal preferences in order to create a merry atmosphere of karaoke as a common space [*ba no fun’iki*]. Whereas pupils listen to their personal music repeatedly in order to memorise and sing it in karaoke, nobody makes an effort to memorise common music for karaoke with friends, as it is not directly related to their identities, and is available for everyone to sing without effort. Common music is so simple that pupils memorise it spontaneously from TV theme songs or commercials.

### *Standard music*

‘Standard music’ is that which pupils and teachers accept as a shared popular music between different generations because of its popularity and longevity. Standard music is well represented by the sound tracks of Hollywood films, which are targeted across generations. Because of its musically sophisticated structure and melodic accessibility, music teachers find it suitable for classroom use. Folk song [*foku songu*] (Western-style folk songs), or so-called ‘campfire songs’ are also standard music in school. For campfires in school summer holidays, Japanese children are given ‘campfire song books’ that include 1960s and 1970s popular songs such as ‘Where have all the flowers gone’ and many other made-in-Japan folk songs following the style of Bob Dylan, Joan Baez and Peter, Paul and Mary. In the 1970s, these songs were common music for the parents and teachers of my informants. However, as time has passed, they have continued to be sung by different generations. Especially in school, they have become

standard music, and as such are safe, peaceful, durable and highly memorable beyond the particular socio-cultural context.

Typical examples of standard music in the music textbooks [*kyôkasho*] used in Japanese schools are ‘Tsubasa wo kudasai’ (Please Give Me Wings: Western-style folk song), ‘Yesterday’ (a world-famous song of the Beatles) or ‘My Favorite Things’ (a jazz standard originating in the musical ‘The Sound of Music’). Although *shôka* [school songs] have been sung from generation to generation, they are not included in the list of standard music. Whereas standard music derives from common music as popular hit songs of the particular time through the mass media, *shôka* were formally provided by the Japanese government through school music education.

#### 4.6 Japanese Popular Music for Youth Today

It is helpful to give a brief sketch of the Japanese popular music scene today, before analysing pupils’ relationships with it in the following chapters. As I explained on p. 19, westernisation in Japan started from the Meiji Era. Apart from school music education where *shôka* (school songs for children) dominated, since the late nineteenth century, Japanese composers have tried to make new songs by accommodating Japanese traditional musical elements to Western musical harmonisation or forms. In the area of popular music, they composed songs such as *kayôkyoku* or *enka* as an indigenous *uta* (song) being very true to Japanese lives. While the former looks ‘fashionable’ to youth’s eyes for its orientation towards Western popular music, the latter is thought to be more ‘traditional’ for its use of melismatic vocalisation and the lyrics’ expression of vernacular and familiar Japanese sentiments.<sup>5</sup>

Here I must provide an explanation of some ambiguous Japanese terms. Western-style popular music made in Japan is called ‘*hōgaku*’, as distinct from Western European popular music. The term ‘*hōgaku*’ (Japanese music) has two main meanings: ‘traditional Japanese music’ (e.g. *Hōgaku Journal*, published in Japan) and ‘Western-style popular music made in Japan’. In this thesis, I use the term in the latter sense. Likewise, the English term ‘folk song’ embraces two concepts in Japanese: traditional regional songs [*min’yō*] and Western-style folk songs [*fōku songu*, a loan word from English]. In this thesis, I use the term ‘folk song’ in the latter sense, indicating Western

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<sup>5</sup> See p. 81 and p. 84 of this thesis for more about *enka*. On the history of popular music before and after World War II, Fujie (2001) gives a concise picture.

and Western-style folk songs, generally including guitar accompaniment and composed and performed in the style of artists of the 1960s and 1970s such as Bob Dylan, Joan Baez and Peter, Paul and Mary.

For an holistic understanding of Japanese popular music, IASPM-Japan (1991) provides a helpful guide, whereas I mention only Japanese popular music *for youth*, and then only that which attracts *ordinary* fans rather than small, transient subcultures, whose members are known as *otaku*, ‘nerd’ listeners in Japan. *Otaku* has two meanings in Japanese; ‘shut oneself in at home [*taku*]’; and calling another person ‘you’ [*otaku*] instead of their real name because of a lack of interest in others. *Otaku* are asocial enthusiasts with a negative connotation, who have an exclusive interest in their own preference (for further discussion of *otaku*, see Condry 1999: 169).

Christenson and Peterson (1988) criticised the tendency to rely on audience-external metageneric terms that gloss over a number of meaningful distinctions made by adolescents (Christenson and Peterson 1988: 283). I also have reservations about discussing the latest market trends of Japanese popular music, which fail to accurately reflect voices of *ordinary* young performers and listeners. In this sense, my criticism of texts that refer to only *otaku*-type listeners is close to that of Finnegan (1989), Cohen (1991) and Williams (2001), as discussed in Chapter 2. I map the Japanese popular music scene on the basis of my informants’ own distinctions, the bulk of which referred to ordinary musical practices in everyday lives. To put it another way: following Christenson and Peterson (1988), in order to place importance on how youth make popular music meaningful, I ‘posit a more general *preference structure* that organizes genres into coherent groups of musics – “metagenres,” in a sense – that reflect the way listeners map the universe of music types’ (*ibid.*: 283, original emphasis), rather than give a complete picture of up-to-date popular music culture in Japan.

In this thesis, I distinguish ‘sub-styles’ from ‘genres’ which are created by record companies and radio/television broadcasting stations. In this regard, it can be said that genres have already been established before pupils encounter them, whereas ‘sub-styles’ result from pupil’s individual musical tastes as discovered through my fieldwork. In other words, whilst for pupils, genre is *a priori*, sub-style is *a posteriori*. There is no doubt as to the overlap between genres and sub-styles. For example, what

my informants defined as ‘visual rock’ agreed with music journalism.<sup>6</sup> However, I focus my attention on the way pupils discriminate between their own favourite artists and others as a code of ‘distinction’ in Bourdieu’s sense (Bourdieu 1984). A Japanese sociologist, Tatsuo Inamasu, referred to this phenomenon of youngsters’ fine distinctions between musical sub-styles as a ‘divided island society’ [*sumiwake shakai*] (Inamasu 1995: 98), resulting from the individualisation and diversification of people’s lifestyles. With the term ‘sub-style’, I hope to emphasise that pupils in my fieldwork put much more importance on their own distinctions of *sub-styles* than on established *genres* given by the music industry.

Generally speaking, Japanese youngsters mainly listen to *hōgaku* so-called ‘J-pop’ (Japanese pop),<sup>7</sup> mainstream popular songs in contemporary society in Japan. J-pop is largely divided into four major sub-styles:<sup>8</sup> *diva-kei*;<sup>9</sup> guitar band; visual pop/rock (*visual-kei*); idol pop. As its name suggests, ‘*diva-kei*’ is a sub-style of proficient female singers from Miwa Yoshida (the vocalist of ‘Dreams Come True’, CD-ROM, Track 1), Namie Amuro to the hippest Hikaru Utada and Ayumi Hamasaki who could be referred to as Japanese Whitney Houstons or Celine Dions. ‘Guitar band’ often indicates ‘hard rock’, in which a lead guitar plays a crucial part. However, in the context of 1990s Japan, ‘guitar band’ has become a sub-style, based on simple chord progressions like those of folk songs. The Beatles is one of the most important models for Japanese guitar bands. A popular unit, Yuzu (CD-ROM, Track 3), an influential band Mr. Children (CD-ROM, Track 2), Spitz and a singer-songwriter Tamio Okuda (CD-ROM, Track 5), are all included in this ‘guitar band’ category. Sometimes, all ‘non-visual’ rock bands are included in this sub-style. ‘Visual pop/rock’ originally

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<sup>6</sup> Music magazines such as *Fool’s Mate*, *Shox’x* (both published by Ongaku Senkasha), *Vicious* (published by Shinkō Music, discontinued in 2001) or *M Gazette* (published by Tricycle Music) have contributed to the establishment of the genre ‘visual rock’.

<sup>7</sup> ‘J’ has been used to signify a renewal of the old image of Japan since the public railway corporation, Nihon Kokuyū Tetsudō (Kokutetsu), was privatised as JR (Japan Railway) in 1987. Other instances of privatisation are JT (Japan Tobacco) and JA (Japan Agricultural Co-operatives). Since the 1990s, J-league (football) has promoted an image of new-born Japan after the burst of the economic bubble. Likewise, ‘J-pop’, which appeared in 1994 in the mass media, has been used as a name for new made-in-Japan songs [*hōgaku*], as distinct from Western-European popular music [*yōgaku*].

<sup>8</sup> For a better understanding of these four sub-styles, I include a CD-ROM with this thesis: see Appendix A. When I mention an artist whose music is included on the CD-ROM, I put the number of the relevant track in parentheses.

<sup>9</sup> *Kei*, when used as a suffix, means system, group or ancestry. In the context of popular music, *kei* indicates a special genre of J-pop, such as Shibuya-*kei* or Komuro-*kei*.

meant rock bands that attach great importance to visual as well as musical aspects, but the term has recently been used to refer to a sub-style of Japanese popular music in which male band members put on theatrical make-up and dress. X Japan (CD-ROM, Track 10), Luna Sea (CD-ROM, Track 11), Malice Mizer (CD-ROM, Track 12), GLAY (CD-ROM, Track 13) and L'arc~en~ciel (CD-ROM, Track 14)<sup>10</sup> all represent the sub-style. Finally, 'idol pop' enjoys a constant demand. Girl idols, Speed (broken up in 2000, CD-ROM, Track 16) and Morning Musume are two recent, highly popular idol groups, whilst Johnny's-*kei*, so-called after the name of a music agent, Johnny's, has constantly produced male idol groups over three decades. An idol group called SMAP (CD-ROM, Track 17), which is popular amongst female and male youths and adults, is Johnny's most successful group.<sup>11</sup> The third sub-style, visual rock, is the most important to my fieldwork, because it peaked in 1998, the year of my first fieldwork. Therefore, through the analysis of pupils' discourses on popular music, I provide a picture of dynamics among the four sub-styles centered on visual rock. It must be added that young listeners are not always concerned as to which sub-style their favourite music belongs. Indeed, for contemporary teenagers, individual singers and bands are more significant than sub-styles.

Of particular importance here is the fact that Western-European pop/rock [*yôgaku*] is currently much less popular in Japan than in the 1970s and 1980s.<sup>12</sup> One reason could be its English lyrics which teenagers cannot easily sing at karaoke, unlike J-pop, which has had nationwide popularity since the late 1980s. On the other hand, '*enka*', which is a traditional Japanese popular song, usually concerning sad stories about the separation of adult lovers, is not covered in this study.<sup>13</sup> Its style remains generally conservative, like that of US-American Country & Western, and its audience is middle-aged and not attractive to young listeners.<sup>14</sup> This unbalanced preference

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<sup>10</sup> The latter two have now changed to become 'non-visual' rock bands.

<sup>11</sup> White (1995) gives a picture of girls' desire for boy idol pop groups within the context of teenage girls' cultural consumption.

<sup>12</sup> According to Kawabata (1991), in 1989 in Japan, the consumption rate of *hōgaku* recordings was 64.7 per cent while that of *yōgaku* recordings was 35.3 per cent (p. 335). However, in 1998, the consumption rate of *hōgaku* recordings increased to 87.5 per cent, while that of *yōgaku* recordings decreased to 11.6 per cent (Dentsu Sōken 2000: 90).

<sup>13</sup> See Okada (1991) and Yano (2002) for a full discussion on *enka*.

<sup>14</sup> An exception would be Kiyoshi Hikawa, a good-looking idol *enka* singer who is popular among both young and middle-aged women. The reason for his popularity among young people, aside from his age and teen-oriented fashion sense, could be that his repertoire shows the possibility of *enka* as beat music.



between the popularity of J-pop in karaoke and the unpopularity of *enka* with youth, shows their ambivalent feelings for what counts as Japanese music. Although this issue is beyond the range of this study, it is worth mentioning here that there is an increasing number of insightful studies, for example, Satô (1999), Condry (1999), Yano (2001) and de Ferranti (2002) for bridging the gap between popular music studies and research on Japanese traditional music in order to delve into what is “Japanese” in contemporary Japanese popular music.

Needless to say, there are many other sub-styles, such as game music or indie pop, that I discuss in the appropriate context. Apart from a big singer Namie Amuro, young singers and groups from Okinawa Prefecture, such as Da Pump or MAX, can be categorised into idol pop because they are popular among preteens and early teenagers. Meanwhile, the Rinken Band or the Nenes are called ‘Okinawa pop’ and are popular among people in their thirties and forties (see Roberson 2001 for an analysis of the relation between the image of Okinawa pop and cultural politics). Therefore, neither were referred to by my informants. By the same token, hip-hop does not appear as a scene in my thesis because its fans are not high school pupils, but college students.<sup>15</sup> Roughly speaking, girls like *diva-kei*, and in 1998, a considerable number of both boys and girls listened to *visual-kei* but in very different ways. On the contrary, guitar band listeners and visual pop/rock fans are largely opposed. Idol pop seems to be liked by younger listeners such as primary school or junior high school pupils. When I come to cite pupils’ actual discourses, I will analyse these relations more fully.

One can have access to all four major sub-styles through Japanese TV music programmes, which are immensely influential in the country. According to a 1995 survey by *NHK Hôshô Bunka Kenkyûsho* (the Institute of NHK Broadcasting Culture), Japanese watch television for three hours and twenty-eight minutes a day on average. The next most popular mass media is newspapers, which only 51 per cent of respondents read everyday (NHK Hôshô Bunka Kenkyûsho 1996: 54). Not only TV music programmes, but also drama programmes and commercials provide mainstream popular music in Japan. This has been especially true since the 1990s, when mainstream popular music began to be more closely tied in with TV drama programmes and commercials. Television is a necessity of life for the bulk of Japanese

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<sup>15</sup> See Condry (1999) for an insightful ethnographic study on hip-hop and rap culture in Japan.

people, the most effective promoter of popular music, and the main source of up-to-date information on popular music for ordinary young listeners today.

## Chapter 5

# Popular Music, Musical Practice and Gender in the Formal Learning Space

### 5.1 Personal Music in the Classroom

#### 5.1.1 *Boys and Personal Music in the Classroom*

In this chapter, I will analyse boys' and girls' discourses on popular music in the formal space. Firstly, I discuss boy and girl listeners in classroom and school events, and then boy and girl performers in a brass band club in school.

Before starting my fieldwork with Japanese high school pupils in 1998, I had a preconception that there must be some 'gender stereotyped' differences between female and male pupils' musical preferences; for example, whereas girls like songs with romantic lyrics, boys prefer heavy metal and so on. However, no sooner had I visited the high school than I found that gender differences between boys' and girls' musical preferences were inconspicuous.

As suggested in Chapter 4, when we ask high school pupils today what their favourite musical genres are, their responses include only individual artists' or groups' names. In order to get a clue about the musical world of youth to begin with, I did a small questionnaire survey in a high school asking the pupils which genres they liked. Most girls and boys responded that they listened to 'mainstream popular music', or so-called J-pop. The genres I provided in the questionnaire were; Japanese traditional folk song, *enka* (see p. 81 and 84), Japanese rock, Western European rock, Japanese pop, popular song [*kayôkyoku*], new music, jazz fusion, soul and R&B, reggae and Latin, dance and hip hop, Western-style folk song, easy listening, world music and classical music. Out of 43 respondents, 20 listened to 'Japanese pop' and 36 listened to '*kayôkyoku*'. Although J-pop is quite new and *kayôkyoku* generally refers to Japanese popular songs before the 1990s, pupils seem to understand the latter as 'Japanese popular music of today'. Statistics show that individual and gender differences in musical tastes have become inconspicuous as a result of the all-pervasive influence of the mass media on Japanese youngsters. The results of my questionnaire on musical preferences indicated a similarly monolithic appearance of Japanese adolescence today.

It was only after starting classroom observations and interviews in the high school that I found important differences in the ways in which boys and girls adapt their ‘personal music’ to the particular setting, in the sense that differences between girls’ and boys’ discourses on popular music changed according to where they were, that is, in the formal, semi-formal or informal space. I noticed that the school is the very place where adolescents are most cautious about revealing their personal music in public. These findings could not be developed by a questionnaire survey alone.

From April to September 1998, I visited High School X in Hyogo Prefecture and observed music classes and a choral contest in a school festival. In July, I conducted two interviews with the help of Mr. Tanaka,<sup>1</sup> the head of music. The first was held as a mixed-gender group interview in a composition class, whilst the second was held as an all-girl interview in a guitar class.<sup>2</sup> Mr. Tanaka attended the first interview during the composition class but only as an observer. Although all pupils ‘performed’ music during the two classes, the interviews were about their ‘listening’ styles in relation to their favourite artists, because, for the purposes of this data analysis, I regard them not as performers but as *listeners* in school.

I begin by analysing boy listeners’ discourses on popular music. Throughout the interview held during a composition class in July 1998, the three boy interviewees showed different types of musical orientation. Firstly, Noriyuki,<sup>3</sup> who called himself a ‘fussy music lover’, elucidated his personal music as follows:<sup>4</sup>

[Interview 1; Noriyuki (m), Naoto (m), Takao (m), Yoshie (f), Madoka (f), Megumi (f) and Chieko (f); a music teacher’s anteroom in High School X]<sup>5</sup>

KK [*myself*]: What artists do you usually listen to?

Noriyuki: My taste in music is very different from others, more violent than Seikima II [known as a Japanese follower of US-American rock band Kiss because of its demoniac make-up]. I think nobody understands my tastes. I listen to the artists who never appear on TV.

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<sup>1</sup> Teachers’ names in this study are pseudonyms.

<sup>2</sup> All pupils in these two classes were in the third year (Year 12) of high school, and aged 17 to 18. Both were optional music classes in the curriculum.

<sup>3</sup> Pupils’ names in this study are all pseudonyms.

<sup>4</sup> The conversations were originally spoken and transcribed in Japanese and then translated into English.

<sup>5</sup> See Appendix B for a transcript notation of the interviews.

KK: What artists [.]

Noriyuki: Malice Mizer [called the ‘ultimate visual band’ for its gorgeous costumes and theatrical stages, CD-ROM, Track 12].<sup>6</sup>

Noriyuki seemed enthusiastic to ‘show off’ his knowledge of Japanese visual pop/rock, and, like others, constructed his musical tastes *par excellence* through his discourses on Malice Mizer.

[Interview 1]

Noriyuki: Ordinary listeners are deceived by their [Malice Mizer’s] appearance. But when you listen to their music, you will find it very terrific.

KK: My image of visual-*kei* is that enthusiasts go to concerts with costume playing [.]

Noriyuki: I never go to concerts or gigs. I listen to only CDs.

It is worth noticing here that Noriyuki discriminated between the musical aspect of Malice Mizer and its visual aspect, and this preference permeated his discourse throughout. For instance, when he distanced himself from costume playing girls, he devoted himself entirely to the musical aspect of Malice Mizer. Such single-mindedness made him seem the most fanatic (*otaku*) of all the pupils (see the discussion on p. 82).

Noriyuki spoke proudly of a male friend who was enthusiastic about indie visual bands, and seemed to have influenced Noriyuki’s fanatic listening.

[Interview 1]

KK: How do you collect information on popular music?

Noriyuki: From one of my friends. He is much more maniac than me and [.] well, he’s a fanatic guy. He has collected many CDs of visual bands whom nobody knows, and then he even makes an indie band ranking by himself.

KK: Sounds fabulous.

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<sup>6</sup> It is also called a ‘male version of Takarazuka’. See p. 59 and p. 115 of this thesis.

*Noriyuki:* He recommends me ‘Next, this band and that band must become popular’. So, I go to a second-hand record shop and buy their CDs.

*KK:* Do you buy second-hand CDs because new CDs are expensive?

*Noriyuki:* Yeah. I prefer to buy second-hand CDs so that I can collect more information. But I buy CDs on impulse.

*KK:* By checking on sleeves of CDs?

*Noriyuki:* When I found them ‘Oh, looks grotesque’, then I cannot help buying them.

As Noriyuki’s friend did not opt for music classes, I could not meet him, but his influence over his friend *outside* the classroom brought about the effect of distinguishing his knowledge of popular music from educational judgement *inside* the classroom.

Noriyuki performed percussion in a brass band club in High School X and played classical music as an extra-curricular activity. While rock band activities were popular among male pupils in 1998 in Japan, he did not perform visual rock inside or outside school and devoted himself to listening and singing it in a karaoke box. As I discussed in Chapter 4 (p. 80), karaoke singing deeply relates to young people’s listening behaviour. Therefore, karaoke singing is not regarded as ‘performance’ in this thesis, but as an extension of everyday listening, as will be discussed in 5.1.2, 5.2, 5.4 and 7.1.3. Noriyuki’s restriction to listening to CDs and karaoke, both with reference to visual rock, made a marked contrast with the costume playing girls, whose main activity was attending concerts and gigs in the costume of their visual rock idols, as I discuss in Chapter 7.

#### [Interview 1]

*KK:* Do you attend concerts or gigs?

*Noriyuki:* Oh, tickets are too expensive! Instead of buying such expensive tickets, I can buy a CD. Actually, I can replay CDs as many times as I want. I prefer to listen to CDs. Even if I go to a gig, it’s merely one-off. It’s not necessary for me to cheer the band with others.

Throughout the interview, Noriyuki conspicuously distinguished his musical taste from that of other interviewees in the classroom context. Nevertheless, when he talked about visual pop/rock as a sub-style, it enabled him to negotiate with the visual rock orientation of his peer group. I consider the relationship between the three boy pupils as a 'peer group', because they seemed to be on such good terms with each other outside the classroom, and respected one another's musical orientations. Noriyuki continued:

[Interview 1]

*KK:* Have you listened to very different music from others since junior high school age?

*Noriyuki:* Nope. I didn't join the brass band club in junior high school. I joined a tennis club then. I started to listen to visual pop when I entered high school.

*KK:* Oh, really? Have your friends had an influence on the fact that you now listen to visual pop?

*Noriyuki:* Yeah. We all frequently went to karaoke, and I found it very interesting.

*KK:* Are your karaoke friends all visual popular fans?

*Noriyuki:* All are. Four or five visual popular fans go together and sing and sing a lot.

*KK:* Sounds exciting.

*Noriyuki:* 'Cause, it's no use doing the same thing as others do. Why don't you do different things from others?

*KK:* So, do you listen to visual bands because your taste is different from others'?

*Noriyuki:* Sure. There's nothing more bizarre than visual pop, is there?

*KK:* Are there many groups of visual popular listeners in this high school?

*Noriyuki:* All do. Band members are all visual-*kei* lovers [everybody nods].

Thus, as the interview progressed, Noriyuki utilised his private musical capital to reconstruct himself as a 'visual popular fan', which was far more likely to win his peers' approval. Noriyuki's strategies for showing off his personal music (Malice

Mizer) in the context of what I call the ‘common music’ of the peer group (visual rock) gradually led me to notice how he cautiously calculated his discourses with reference to visual rock. For Noriyuki, this distancing lent him the authority of an ‘expert’ in popular music for the rest of his class. Noriyuki, as described above, chose Malice Mizer as his personal music because of its extremeness in visual rock:

[Interview 1]

*KK:* Do you listen to visual bands because they are the most bizarre at the moment? In that case, if there appears much more bizarre bands, will you shift to them?

*Noriyuki:* Oh, I can promise you that I will. I listen to visual bands somehow at the moment.

Noriyuki’s ‘snobbish’ discourses represented him as a ‘slippery guy’ in the classroom, who could only reveal his personal music in public as a matter of self-positioning.

Noriyuki’s counterpart, Takao, the second boy pupil, listened to another visual band, GLAY, (CD-ROM, Track 13) in the context of a visual-pop peer culture.

[Interview 1]

*KK:* How do you listen to music in everyday life?

*Takao:* On radio.

*KK:* Which one, AM or FM?

*Takao:* FM.

*KK:* Do you listen to FM 802?

*Takao:* Nope, FM 85.1. I also listen to FM 802.

*KK:* Do you usually listen to the radio in the evening after school?

*Takao:* Yes.

*KK:* And do you buy CDs which you listen to on radio?

*Takao:* Nope. I don’t buy CDs. Just listening to the radio.

*Noriyuki and Naoto [another boy]:* [Laugh mockingly]

*KK:* Do you just listen to the radio and do not buy CDs?

*Takao:* That’s the best way to collect information without spending money.



*Noriyuki:* Buying CDs anytime costs dearly.

*KK:* Don't you play in a band?

*Takao:* No. Only listening.

*KK:* What artists do you like?

*Takao:* GLAY.

*KK:* Oh, are you also a visual popular fan?

*Takao:* Yes, but I listen to only GLAY. I can't follow Malice [Mizer]

*Noriyuki:* Why don't you follow them?

*KK:* For you, GLAY differs from Malice Mizer, doesn't it?

*Takao:* Of course. GLAY is ordinary, but Malice is [.]

*Noriyuki:* You want to say Malice is bizarre, don't you?

*Takao:* I don't like such a bizarre band [.]

*Noriyuki:* Well, GLAY is ordinary among visual bands. The most presentable band.

In contrast with Noriyuki, Takao preferred to be an ordinary teenage listener. Furthermore, while Noriyuki spent most of his allowance on buying CDs, Takao relied on information from the radio in order to save money. After Takao showed his average attitude to music, these two contrasting visual pop/rock listeners started to fight an ongoing battle to establish the limits of their personal music:

[Interview 1]

*Noriyuki:* In general, the visual band makes only one hit song and disappears.  
GLAY is an exception.

*Takao:* Yeah!

*Noriyuki:* But in the case of Malice, the lack of hit songs make them quite stable.  
They will never go down, as they are at the bottom (*mainaa*) even now.

Takao tried to legitimise his favourite band GLAY by way of its popularity through the mass media, whilst Noriyuki had contempt for Takao's mediocre musical taste and distinguished Noriyuki's eccentricity in the peer group by referring to Malice Mizer as a band for nerd fans. Both boys situated themselves within the peer group by making

use of their personal music (Malice Mizer/GLAY). In this subcultural peer group, there seemed to be an unspoken agreement among boys that visual pop/rock as common music of the group was a frame of reference to talk about their personal musical preferences. However, two boys used different strategies to situate their personal music with reference to common music. That is to say, by calculating a distance from the common music of the peer group (visual rock), boys negotiated and differentiated between members and positioned themselves as ‘ordinary’ (Takao as a GLAY listener) or ‘nerd’ (Noriyuki as a Malice Mizer listener).

When there is a gap between personal and peer evaluations of popular music, male pupils feel obliged to undertake some subtle revisions. In contrast to Noriyuki and Takao, Naoto, the third boy pupil, was a non-visual popular fan. Whilst Naoto was deeply devoted to Mr. Children (*Misu-chiru*, a representative Japanese guitar band of the 1990s, CD-ROM, Track 2),<sup>7</sup> he felt the need to relinquish this allegiance when rehearsing with his peer group band, which copied the visual band Luna Sea (CD-ROM, Track 11), in order to accommodate himself to the other band members’ tastes. Although Naoto refers here to performance, he relates to his personal music (*Misu-chiru*) as a listener.

[Interview 1]

KK: You belong to a band and play guitar, don’t you?

Naoto: [...] a bit.

Noriyuki: Do you really do that?

Naoto: Other members force me to play.

KK: Do they force you?

Naoto: Yes, I have drifted under their control [...]

KK: So, what artists do you usually listen to?

Naoto: *Misu-chiru* [definitely].

KK: What things do you like about *Misu-chiru*?

Naoto: Everything.

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<sup>7</sup> The names of popular bands and singers are often abbreviated, for example, *Misu-chiru* is derived from Mr. Children, *Chage-asu* from Chage & Aska, and *Judi-mari* from Judy And Mary. Similarly, the world famous computer game *Pokemon* is short for ‘Pocket Monster’. Such word-play is a distinctive feature of Japanese popular culture.

- KK: Everything [...] words or melodies?
- Naoto: When I listened to their words and melodies, I found all of them great.
- KK: Right. Do you think you would like to play pieces by *Misu-chiru* in your band?
- Naoto: Yes [...] but other members are all visual-*kei* fans [...]
- KK: So you can't play them, can you?
- Naoto: No [...]
- KK: What songs do you sing at karaoke?
- Naoto: In my case, my choice often spoils the merry atmosphere of karaoke, so I don't care any longer.
- KK: You mean [...] you take all the fun out of karaoke when you sing *Misu-chiru*?
- Naoto: Right.
- Noriyuki: He's a real original.
- KK: Even in that situation, do you still go to karaoke with visual popular fan friends?
- Naoto: Yes, I get accustomed to being mocked.

Naoto's discourses show his mettle for enduring the mismatch of his own personal music (guitar band) and the common music of the peer group (visual pop/rock). As mentioned above, Naoto joined a band named 'Mirage' which copied Luna Sea. It is interesting that the band name 'Mirage' itself represented the transient and unrealistic character of visual rock in Japan, as Luna Sea, in its derivation from the English 'lunacy', suggests 'madness' (literally 'moon-struck').<sup>8</sup> Naoto joined this visual-rock-oriented band reluctantly, for reasons that correspond to why he opted for the composition class:

[Interview 1]

- KK: Why do you opt for the composition class? Do you have a plan to compose some types of music?

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<sup>8</sup> For a discussion of the gender identity and names of amateur bands in the USA, see Clawson

*Naoto:* I have been fond of listening to music since I was a junior high school pupil. But I had no chance to ask somebody about music then. I had to teach myself how to play. I couldn't even learn piano in my childhood. So, that is to say, a kind of 'self-development' [...] I was hoping to find the extent of possibilities in my talent [...]

*KK:* I see. So what kind of music do you hope to compose from now on?

*Naoto:* Both words and music. I want to make original songs.

Naoto joined his peer group band in order to perform music somehow, although their musical orientation towards visual rock was totally different from Naoto's personal music. For this seventeen-year-old boy, composition class was another place where he could explore his musical potential.

Whereas Noriyuki's 'personal music' was Malice Mizer and that of Takao was GLAY, which are both visual rock bands, the personal music of Naoto was Mr. Children, who are a guitar band, despite the fact that the 'common music' of their subcultural peer group was visual rock/pop. Noriyuki and Takao did not exclude Naoto from the conversation on popular music because of the discrepancy between their musical tastes, but on the contrary, they accepted him because his liking of a guitar band, Mr. Children, opposed, and thereby objectified their common music – visual rock.

When the interview was over, Naoto came close to the interviewer and, with a smile, said 'You'd better not take today's talk as a general high school pupils' tendency'. Whether his expressed personal music was *really* his or not makes little difference to the fact that he made use of his 'personal music' to maintain his position within the subcultural peer group in the formal space. Common music provided a basis for the boy to construct his own musical identity with reference to his personal music. By making use of common music as a point of reference, the boys developed a mutual discourse on their own personal music through peer group dynamics.

### **5.1.2 *Girls and Personal Music in the Classroom***

Whereas boys tended to talk about their personal music within the context of the peer

group, the girls talked about their personal musical tastes very vaguely in the classroom. Chieko was a female pupil who planned to go to music college to study piano. At the same time, she seemed enthusiastic to sing songs. When I attended a school festival at High School X in June 1998, Chieko sang a song by Dreams Come True (CD-ROM, Track 1), so, I thought she liked their vocalist, Miwa Yoshida, who is categorised as ‘diva-*kei*’ due to her singing proficiency. However, when I asked Chieko about her personal music, she spoke evasively about it and so did her classmate, Megumi.

[Interview 1; Noriyuki (m), Naoto (m), Takao (m), Yoshie (f), Madoka (f), Megumi (f) and Chieko (f); a music teacher’s anteroom in High School X]

KK: I remember that you sang *Dori-kamu*’s [Dreams Come True’s] song in the school festival, didn’t you? Do you like *Dori-kamu*?

Chieko: Not particularly [pause]

KK: Well, do you like to sing?

Chieko: Yeah.

KK: What kind of music do you usually listen to?

Chieko: Let’s see [.]

Yoshie [another female pupil]: There are many classical music fans in this school.

Madoka [another female pupil]: Yeah, there are.

KK: Do you like classical music?

Chieko: Yes, I listen to it.

KK: Do you have favourite composers?

Chieko: Composers?

KK: Eh, don’t you listen to classical music by the name of composers?

Chieko: [pause] Chopin.

.

KK: Do you listen to *yôgaku* [Western-European popular music]?

Chieko: I tried Celine Dion.

KK: How about you, Megumi?

Megumi: Anything will do. I just listen to music on radio or TV [pause]

The first and foremost feature of girls in class is that they tended not to disclose their personal music in front of their classmates, the music teacher and myself. Female pupils tactically mention 'safe' artists such as Celine Dion, an international singer, who is sufficiently distant from everyday contexts, or by replying 'anything' to disguise their own musical tastes. In a girls' acoustic guitar class, they concealed their personal music by way of negative assertions such as 'I *don't* like Artist X, Y or Z'.

[Interview 2; Yoshie (f), Sayaka (f), Masako (f), Chieko (f) and Miyuki (f); music classroom in High School X]

KK: Do you like some artists, Sayaka?

Sayaka: Now, I listen to Tokio [it belongs to Johnny's].

KK: Are you a Tokio fan?

Sayaka: Not really [.]

KK: So, why do you listen to Tokio?

Sayaka: By chance, one of my friends lent their CD to me.

KK: Is your friend a Tokio fan?

Sayaka: Nope.

KK: Did you ask her to lend it to you?

Sayaka: No, she said she couldn't be bothered to take it home.

KK: Right [.] but are some of your friends Johnny's fans?

All: Not really [.]

Sayaka: Miss Akino likes SMAP [CD-ROM, Track 17], doesn't she?

Chieko: And Speed.

Masako: But idol fans are very rare.

KK: Don't you like SMAP or other idol popular groups?

Chieko: I used to listen to them.

KK: How about *Kinki* [Kinki Kids, a popular idol duo which belongs to Johnny's, CD-ROM, Track 18]?

Miyuki: Nope, they are too clean.

KK: Do you go to gigs or concerts?

Sayaka: I've been once.

KK: Whose concert?

*Sayaka:* Curio [male idol popular group, less popular than Johnny's-*kei* groups].

*KK:* Do you like Curio?

*Sayaka:* Nope. I went there with my sister.

*KK:* Is your sister their fan?

*Sayaka:* Yeah.

A series of dodges and excuses continued. By the end of the interview, the girls had managed to conceal their personal music in the context of the classroom by keeping 'others' at a discreet distance, saying '*my friends* and/or *sisters* are fond of that artist', or 'I *used to* listen' and by claiming allegiance to 'common music' or 'standard music'. Through these tactics, they succeeded in hiding the personal music to which they were deeply committed at that moment. This first feature of concealing personal music in girls' discourses on popular music manifested itself in many ways during two interviews. Despite the fact that some girls seemed to be on good terms with each other in their everyday lives outside school, unlike their male counterparts, they seemed so distant from each other in the classroom that there was no possibility of them forming a female peer subculture.

The second feature of girl listeners in the classroom is that, although some listened to music incessantly outside school, they sometimes could not articulate their experiences. Whilst this tactic seems to be another way of concealing their personal music in the formal learning space, there are significant differences. Megumi was a female pupil who opted for the composition class.

[Interview 1; Noriyuki (m), Naoto (m), Takao (m), Yoshie (f), Madoka (f), Megumi (f) and Chieko (f); a music teacher's anteroom in High School X]

*KK:* [After asking Chieko whether she listens to Western-European popular music] How about you, Megumi?

*Megumi:* Anything will do. I just listen to music on radio or TV [pause]

*KK:* Anything? Do you even listen to *enka*?

*Megumi:* I don't mind.

*KK:* So, as you can't listen to music during school time, when you go back to home, do you turn on the radio and [.]

*Megumi:* I always turn on the radio. Without music, I feel uneasy.

*KK:* Well, for you, as long as music can be heard, its genre does not matter, does it?

*Megumi:* You're right.

*KK:* If you cannot listen to music for a week, what do you think would happen?

*Megumi:* I would die.

*All:* Would you? [surprisingly]

*KK:* You submerge yourself in the music media.

*Megumi:* Yeah, I do.

*KK:* How do you get the information on a new kind of music?

*Megumi:* Well, how do I get that? I don't know [pause]

*KK:* As you always listen to music, a new music comes to your ears?

*Megumi:* Maybe, in such a way.

Although Megumi claimed to be addicted to music, her personal music seemed unarticulated. When I asked her about her karaoke repertoire, she finally started to talk about what she liked.

[Interview 1]

*KK:* What kind of songs do you sing in karaoke?

*Megumi:* I like old songs [.]

*KK:* Old songs?

*Megumi:* Hit songs of 10 years or 15 years ago.

*KK:* Hit songs of [.] say, around 1985?

*Yoshie [another girl interviewee]:* Hikaru Genji [it belonged to Johnny's and was a popular male idol group in the 1980s among Japanese elementary school or junior high school girls]?

*Megumi:* Nope. *Chage-asu* [Chage & Aska, CD-ROM, Track 8].

*KK:* Do you sing male singers' songs?

*Megumi:* Yeah. I also sing Deen's songs [Deen was a popular group in the early 1990s. consisting of three men].



KK: Do you like to sing male singers' songs?

Megumi: Accidentally [*tamatama*] [.]

KK: Do you like words of male singers' songs?

Megumi: It could be one reason.

KK: Don't you sing female singers' songs?

Megumi: Yes, I sing. I also sing English songs.

KK: In English, do you sing female singers' songs?

Megumi: Yeah. I sing Carpenters' songs [.] but I don't know. How can I put it  
[pause] as if I were always in music, I can't explain.

Whilst Megumi could talk about her karaoke repertoire, she still seemed to rely on music of the older generation, rather than identifying with that of her contemporaries. The music class seemed to interrupt her incessant musical world. Mr. Tanaka thought that 'Her musical orientation looks very vague' and so did her classmates. He told me that Megumi was enthusiastic to join a charity organisation as a volunteer outside school. She seemed to identify with this mixed-age group, which might well have influenced her musical disposition towards that of older generations.

For Megumi, music seemed to bring about the effect of 'healing' in her life, saying 'Without music, I feel uneasy' and 'I would die'. When I asked the pupils how they found Muzak, Megumi responded, 'I don't like instrumental music which has so many sounds and is fluctuating. I found it very noisy. If it's a solo [.] such as piano solo or guitar solo music, like smooth sounds, it's allowable (*yuruseru*)'. Although Megumi seemed unaware of what her personal music was in the classroom context, she tactically dodged my questions by dividing music into that which she *permitted*, and that which she *did not permit*. This tendency can be said to be an important ramification of the first feature of girls in the classroom. Despite the fact that some had difficulty in articulating their personal music in public, they knew how to discriminate between allowable and non-allowable musical styles. Whereas the boys exposed their personal music by means of various visible strategies, the girls were hesitant to expose theirs. Hence, knowing how to discriminate allowable music from non-allowable music appeared as girls' invisible tactic to construct their musical world comfortably. It may be the case that some girls do not have their own personal music, but at least

Megumi could talk about her allowable music, which showed her personal musical disposition. In the chaotic situation of contemporary media culture, her personal music could be invisible even to herself, concealed, perhaps, by her musical disposition.

## 5.2 Common Music and Standard Music

### *Common music*

Although their favoured artists differed when they talked about their personal music, Japanese high school pupils share a repertoire of popular music that they enjoy singing with their friends at karaoke. I call this repertoire ‘common music’, as popular songs for karaoke are shared by the same generation. Both high school girls and boys were really into karaoke when I did my fieldwork in 1998. They often went to a karaoke box, which is a small compartment, usually for 5 to 10 members of a group, where they can sing without being bothered by unknown other customers. However, there was a significant difference of karaoke singing style between girls and boys. On the one hand, boys said that they sang their favourite songs individually, and even if they went to the karaoke box in a group, they continued to do so without concerning themselves about what other members of the group sang. When his friends sang, the boy devoted himself to looking for the next song he would sing in order to book its number on the karaoke machine. On the other hand, girls sang common songs together to cheer themselves up.

Here are some boys talking about karaoke in the composition class:

[Interview 1; Noriyuki (m), Naoto (m), Takao (m), Yoshie (f), Madoka (f), Megumi (f) and Chieko (f); a music teacher’s anteroom in High School X]

*KK:* When you go to karaoke, do you sing whatever you like, as your karaoke friends are all *visual-kei* lovers?

*Noriyuki:* Yeah.

*Takao:* As we only care about our own singing, we’ve never heard what our friends sing in karaoke [*jibun de utaun dake de, mawari toka zenzen kîtehenmon nā*].

*Noriyuki:* We only care about ourselves and never mind what others do. I’m not saying that I think only of myself. But [...] actually, it’s true. We’ve never heard what others sing.

*Takao:* We're all struggling with our own singing.

*Naoto:* Yeah. That's why we separate four into two groups and enter karaoke boxes.

*Takao:* We often do so!

*KK:* Is that because you can sing more songs in a smaller group?

*Naoto:* Yeah. That's much better.

Now here are some girls discussing karaoke:

[Interview 2; Yoshie (f), Sayaka (f), Masako (f), Chieko (f) and Miyuki (f); music classroom in High School X]

*KK:* Who is popular among your classmates?

*Chieko:* Ulfu!s [CD-ROM, Track 4] is popular. We all like them.

*KK:* In what points do you all like them?

*Chieko:* Well [...] we can sing songs by them when we finish up karaoke. Their words are very peaceful, aren't they? [To Miyuki] We also sing 'Gakuen tengoku' ['School Paradise'; a 1970s hit song sung by a group Finger Five, which was referred to as 'Japanese Jackson Five'] as the final song of karaoke, don't we?

*Miyuki:* Yeah.

As can be seen, the contrast between the individualism of boys and the cooperativeness of girls was remarkable. The girls relied far more on common music, which is also how they dealt with their personal music in the classroom context. By contrast with male pupils, who do not hesitate to disclose their personal music within a peer group, female pupils tend to keep their private musical tastes secret, preferring to make use of 'common music' in public, so as to confirm a sense of group solidarity.

Everyone can sing common music together, it has a cheerful character and nobody regards it as their own personal music. Common music is 'music for everyone', just as personal music is not for everyone. The power politics of 'personal music' and 'common music' are more complicated in school than in leisure sites because of girls' tactical utilisation of the latter to conceal the former. In his book of interviews focussed

on individuals' conceptions of 'my music', Charles Keil had misgivings about a growing preference for mediated 'my music' through headphones, as opposed to a live and more spontaneous 'our music' (Crafts *et.al.* 1993: 3). As I elucidated in 4.1 (pp. 65-66), whereas Keil's notion of 'my music' dealt with individualistic and idiosyncratic aspects of each person's musical listening, I focus on how pupils' discourses can change and differ according to the learning space rather than what their own musical tastes really are. Although Keil's research focus is different from mine, there is one important similarity between the two studies; that is, the notions of Keil's 'my music' and my 'personal music' have both been coined as opposed to *shared* music.

### *Standard music*

Many pieces of common music survive only as songs for one generation of listeners, but if they are taken up by further generations, they become 'standard music'. Undue emphasis on standard music in Japanese classes raises the issue of 'what counts as popular music' in schools.

According to Mr. Tanaka, 'standard music', such as 1970s Western-style folk songs and film music, were useful resources in music class, since they were familiar to both teachers and pupils. Sound tracks of Hollywood films such as 'Titanic' or 'family' Disney films like 'Aladdin' or 'The Lion King' are representative of standard music. Because they are targeted across generations, both teachers and pupils are familiar with their sound tracks. The sound tracks of Hayao Miyazaki's films, a leading Japanese animated film director, are also very popular in Japanese music classes, and his theme songs are included in textbooks. As 'standard music' endures across generations, it takes on the character of an *autonomous* text, existing beyond everyday contexts. From this perspective, standard and classical music share a de-contextualised nature, although the former is less autonomous because it derives from films, for example.

The predominance of standard music at High School X was evident at the third year (Year 12) choral contest, which I observed from the audience in June 1998. The first prize was given for Credit Course<sup>9</sup> Class 3's rendition of Yôsui Inoue's 'Shônen

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<sup>9</sup> In High School X, there exist two streams; Credit Course and Grade Course. Whereas pupils

jidai' ('Boyhood Days'; Inoue is one of the most popular folk singer-songwriters since the 1970s in Japan, CD-ROM, Track 7), which has been adapted in high school music textbooks. Before that, Grade Course Class 4 sang V6's 'Wa ni natte odorô' ('Let's Dance in a Circle'; V6 belongs to Johnny's, CD-ROM, Track 19), one of the pupils in this class made the following announcement:

As this song is not a choral-like repertoire, we have felt anxious about it. But this song is really suitable for our class and we feel happy when we sing this song. So, it is our great pleasure if you will listen to our rendition and feel happy, too.

Their enthusiastic singing and spontaneous movements won no prizes, whereas Grade Course Class 2's rendition of Chage & Aska's 'Sons and Daughters: soreyori boku ga tsutaetai nowa' ('I'd Rather Pass on to You...'; CD-ROM, Track 8) won the second prize. Whereas Chage & Aska were popular with people in their thirties and forties, and therefore regarded as 'standard music' well-suited to fill the gap between teachers' and pupils' generations, V6 was popular among the younger generation of elementary and junior high school pupils. As a result, in the contest, only the 'standard music' of the older generation was evaluated as 'legitimate' with the consequence that 'standardised songs' tended to be better appreciated by a panel of judges which was composed of teachers in High School X. Whilst it is possible that each class was examined mainly for its musical skills and cooperative spirit, it would nevertheless appear that the education system's selection of 'standard music' as school knowledge exercised its hidden power on the judges. Indeed, at a commendation ceremony, a school head teacher said to the pupils, 'In effect, chorus-style songs have been highly evaluated by the panel of judges'. We are reminded that 'standard music' is allowed into music classrooms only with the consent of adults.

But Mr. Tanaka had difficulty teaching what he regarded as 'standard music'. After observing my interview with pupils, he commented that he had never realised that the musical orientation of high school pupils today was not towards Western-European popular music [*yôgaku*] or instrumental music, but towards Japanese popular songs. In particular, he felt embarrassed that male pupils dismissed jazz fusion, which

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belonging to the former aim to enter universities or colleges, those belonging to the latter aim to obtain jobs after graduation.

he had used in the composition class at that time, in terms of ‘Well, let us leave aside that kind of music’, as Noriyuki said. Mr. Tanaka complained as follows:

[Interview 3; Mr. Tanaka (m); his anteroom in High School X]

These days, I have noticed that pupils look only the surface of artists. Why can’t they listen to the musical aspect of hit songs carefully? Perhaps, for them, instrumental music such as jazz fusion seems too high-quality music. I should have discussed with them ‘What is popular music?’ in much earlier stages. But for the next year’s curriculum, I am planning to teach a history of popular music like the 1970s Western-European rock. ‘Stairway to heaven’ of Led Zeppelin must be good material for them.

Mr. Tanaka showed deep sympathy and understanding for using popular music in school, and had joined a rock band when he was a music college student during the middle 1970s. Nevertheless, even in his case, the discrepancy between ‘what counts as popular music’ for music teachers and for their pupils remained unresolved. Conflicts arose around questions of instrumental music versus songs with lyrics, and ‘international music’ (Western-European standard music) versus ‘domestic music’ (J-pop, Japanese up-to-date popular hit songs). Although popular music was integrated into his music classes, Mr. Tanaka and his pupils had not benefited from a shared ‘standard music’ unless its utility was admitted by both the teacher and pupils. In other words, standard music cannot be effectual in class unless the music teacher admits shared music of the younger generation as standard music, and vice versa.

It has been clarified that the use of standard music between girls and boys in the school context was different. Whilst the boys tended to insist on their musical orientations during music classes and coolly dismissed standard music, the girls welcomed standard music as a means to conform with teachers’ expectations. During my interviews with girl listeners in the classroom, the influence of family members was remarkable. Girls often thought of their mothers’ ‘standard music’ as a part of their heritage. As discussed in Chapter 3 with reference to Bourdieu, ‘popular music as cultural capital’ can be either ‘inherited’ from family members, especially mothers, or ‘acquired’ from peers. In these terms, we have seen that boys ‘acquire’ their musical cultural capital, whereas girls ‘inherit’ theirs.

Masako was inconspicuous during the guitar classes which I observed in High School X. However, when I showed the girls a videotape collection of old and new hit songs, she proved the most knowledgeable about *kayōkyoku*, Japanese mainstream popular songs of the 1970s and 1980s (see p. 87). Mr. Tanaka had not noticed Masako's ample knowledge of *kayōkyoku* as 'everyday knowledge'.

[Interview 3; Mr. Tanaka (m); his anteroom in High School X]

*KK:* I found that Masako has the most ample knowledge on *kayōkyoku* in the guitar class.

*Mr. Tanaka:* Does she? But I think that she feels uninterested in guitar playing in the class. Besides her, all the girls make rapid progress in playing guitar, although I'm not saying that Masako has a lower faculty of playing [...] She is on an average level.

Here Mr. Tanaka's view of pupils was based on their musical proficiency, which is legitimised in school. In particular, he put importance on their ability to perform on instruments. Performance-centred music education in Japan means that, even if pupils are knowledgeable about popular music, this 'everyday knowledge' does not count unless proven by performance. Masako was the only female pupil who could critically discuss the commercial aspect of Japanese popular music, but she felt unable to attribute the source of her knowledge.

[Interview 2; Yoshie (f), Sayaka (f), Masako (f), Chieko (f) and Miyuki (f); music classroom in High School X]

*KK:* Masako, you seem to know many songs on the videotape. Do you like *kayōkyoku*?

*Masako:* Well [...] not particularly.

*KK:* But you know every song, don't you?

*Masako:* Definitely, there are a couple of songs which I don't know.

*KK:* Right. So, how have you known those old songs?

*Masako:* I have no idea [...] but I've heard them somewhere.

It was only as the interview went on, that it became clear that her knowledge of

*kayōkyoku* was inherited from her mother who worked at a CD shop near the school, and talked endlessly about music at home.

[Interview 2]

KK: What artists do you like?

Masako: I like the Beatles.

KK: How did you come to like the Beatles?

Masako: There were their CDs in my home.

KK: Whose CDs were they?

Masako: Whose? They're my mom's.

KK: That means [...] does your mother like the Beatles?

Masako: Yeah. In my house, there are so many other CDs.

KK: Oh, I envy you that there are plenty of CDs in your house.

Masako: Do you think so? My mom works at a company which sells CDs or other things, so she often buys them a lot.

In the case of Masako, popular music formed a close bond between mother and daughter. The karaoke box was a space where she could take over her mother's musical knowledge as inherited capital. It is no surprise that it was the daughter, rather than the son who inherited this cultural capital. In fact, Masako's younger brother was a 'gamer',<sup>10</sup> and so when they went together to an amusement arcade, he went to a game centre while his sister and mother went to sing in a karaoke box.

Masako seemed to identify much more with her mother's generation than with her contemporaries.

[Interview 2]

KK: Do you go to karaoke?

Masako: Nope, I don't.

KK: Oh, don't you go to karaoke? Don't you like to sing?

Masako: I hate to sing.

KK: But [...] in this guitar class, you practice singing and playing guitar, don't

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<sup>10</sup> In Japan, children or adults who are enthusiastic about playing in game centres or with games at



you?

*Masako:* Nevertheless, I don't like it particularly. [pause] I go to karaoke with my mom.

*KK:* With your mother? That sounds nice.

Masako seemed to Mr. Tanaka the most uninterested pupil in the guitar class because she did not like to sing in front of her classmates. In fact, she had enjoyed playing steel pans in her second year (Year 11), and had joined the 'solfège class'<sup>11</sup> because she thought that it would involve more playing, and had been disappointed by its concentration on singing along with guitar.

Furthermore, Masako suffered from the gap between her knowledge of *kayōkyoku* and the folk-song-style music played in the guitar class. While folk songs are legitimised as suitable material for the classroom, *kayōkyoku* are not. One possible reason for this is that the former were composed by Japanese singer-songwriters on the model of 1960s Western neo-folk songs, sung by college 'elite' students, and are still regarded as 'highbrow', while the latter is thought to be 'lowbrow' due to its supposedly vulgar words and themes (see also 4.6). So, while girls who had inherited knowledge of folk song were encouraged by the teacher, Masako who had inherited knowledge of *kayōkyoku* was alienated and undervalued. This unfortunate discrepancy can be illustrated by comparison with Miyuki, another female pupil who opted for the guitar class, and who had inherited folk song capital from her mother. Miyuki could prove her musicality by using her knowledge of folk song in class, whereas Masako could only reproduce her knowledge of *kayōkyoku* in the karaoke singing box and at home.

Both the music teacher and his female pupils thought of folk song as music of the older generation, and it was for this reason that Miyuki seemed to cherish it.

[Interview 2]

*KK:* How do you find folk songs through singing and playing them on guitar?

*Miyuki:* It sounds very fresh, 'cause it is completely different from J-pop in our

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home call themselves 'gamers'.

<sup>11</sup> The title of the guitar class was originally 'solfège'. However, as the content of the class was all about singing along whilst playing guitar, they called it 'guitar class'.

age.

*KK:* So, you like it, don't you?

*Miyuki:* Yeah, my mom really likes such kind of songs. So, I want to practise folk songs and look forward to playing them in front of my mother.

Miyuki played her mother's guitar, and felt proud of her family's musical background.

Whilst different forms of inherited capital divided these two girls into *successful* and *unsuccessful* in the class, both cases show us how girls inherit popular music as cultural capital from their mothers, and how they identify much more with their mothers' generation than with their contemporaries. This 'nostalgic' tendency of female pupils was a remarkable feature of the guitar class. When Mr. Tanaka announced that they were going to play '22-sai no wakare' ('Separation at aged 22'; a 1970s' hit song sung by Kaze, a popular folk song group at that time in Japan) next week and demonstrated it on his guitar, female pupils in the guitar class, apart from Masako, shouted for joy and said 'I want to play that song'.

After finishing the next class, Chieko talked to Miyuki:

[Interview 2]

*Chieko:* A phrase of this song sticks in my head even in other classes. But nobody knows this song in other classes, do they? They ask me 'What's that song?' They regard this kind of song like a totally different world.

*Miyuki:* Yeah! [laugh]

*Chieko:* I proudly talk to my elder brother about us learning this song in school.

Chieko was hesitant about talking of her personal music in the classroom, and seemed very enthusiastic to learn unknown songs of the older generation. Meanwhile, Masako was critical about J-pop such as artists of Komuro-*kei* (CD-ROM, Track 20) or Johnny's, which were mainstream popular music at the time, whom she thought inferior to the popular songs of her mother's generation, knowledge of which lent both girls a sense of superiority over their contemporaries.

There appear to be two reasons why female pupils were more proficient at

employing such standard music in schools, compared to the boys, who showed no interest in it in the formal learning space. Firstly, as discussed in Chapter 3, female pupils often inherited standard music as cultural capital, or *habitus* from their mothers, in the form of classical music or folk songs, which are regarded as legitimate classroom materials. When fathers or elder brothers influenced boys' musical orientation, in most cases, it was towards rock, the bulk of which was usually not regarded as 'standard music' in school. This is one reason why boys were much less involved in standard music than girls.

Secondly, female pupils usually take over standard music as 'performing skill' at home. With their mothers' encouragement, girls learn classical music instruments such as the piano or violin from infancy. Their knowledge of classical music as cultural capital can be easily adapted to playing standard music in class and at school events because the melodic and harmonic tendencies of both are similar. It is conceivable that the superiority of female pupils' performances in Japanese music classes rests on this ability to transfer performing skills.

Green (1997) discussed how the delineated musical meanings (the social context and symbolic content of music) of gender affect perceptions of inherent musical meanings (the syntactical organisation of music) in relation to both popular and classical music. She explained how an affirmative view of the relation between femininity and singing has been constructed, as well as how domestic instruments such as keyboards and plucked strings have been associated with women throughout the history of music. Following Green's thought, I suggest that, because 'standard' ways of performing and singing have been legitimised as school music activities in Japan, many girls gain an advantage over boys. As I pointed out earlier in this section, the undue emphasis on the rendition of standard music can repress personal music and common music in the formal learning context.

The important point is that only 'standard music' can become 'shared' popular music by both teachers and their pupils in the formal learning space. Therefore, in the classroom, whereas music teachers try to use standard music as a means of catering for pupils' popular-oriented musical tastes, pupils conform to their teachers' musical tastes by making use of standard music. As analysed above, girls were generally better at utilising standard music than boys in the school context. In particular, the use of

standard music is beneficial to girls in order to keep their own personal music secret in school.

With reference to these three categories of popular music above, pupils change their discourses on popular music according to different settings in different sites. However, as pupils seem more relaxed to talk about their personal music in the informal space or sometimes in the semi-formal space, as I analyse in Chapter 6 and 7, it is evident that the three categories of popular music are most complex in the formal space.

### **5.3 Gendered Ways of Dealing with Personal Music**

According to my analysis, male pupils preferred to keep their personal music private, although they were prepared to risk disclosing it in the context of emphasising the musical identity of their subcultural peer group. Female pupils, on the other hand, used ‘camouflage’ tactics such as mentioning ‘safe’ artists, using only negative expressions, and keeping ‘others’ at a discreet distance so as to conceal their own personal music, by skillful appeals to common music and standard music in various school contexts. Thus, although each pupil appeared to use different techniques to cover their personal music in front of others, the important difference between boys’ and girls’ techniques can be divided into ‘strategies’ and ‘tactics’, as discriminated by the French thinker, Michel de Certeau.

For Jeremy Ahearne (1995), de Certeau explained how implicit interpretative operations can be understood as more explicitly political operations which bring diverse populations into conformity with prescribed political programmes (Ahearne 1995: 131). De Certeau’s notion of strategies and tactics helps us to understand boys’ and girls’ ways of concealing their personal music in school settings.

In de Certeau’s book, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984), he focussed on various manipulations of everyday practices. He considered the modes of use, or ‘stereotyped procedures accepted and reproduced by a group, its “ways and customs”’, as ‘a matter of recognizing in these “uses” “actions” (in the military sense of the word) that have their own formality and inventiveness and that discreetly organize the multiform labor of consumption’ (de Certeau 1984: 30). Then, he distinguished ‘strategies’ from ‘tactics’ as follows:

I call a *strategy* the calculation (or manipulation) of power relationships that becomes possible as soon as a subject with will and power...can be isolated. It postulates a *place* that can be delimited as its *own* and serve as the base from which relations with an *exteriority* composed of targets or threats...can be managed...it is an effort to delimit one's own place in a world bewitched by the invisible powers of the Other. (de Certeau 1984: 35, original emphasis)

By contrast, he defined 'tactics' as follows:

[A] *tactic* is a calculated action determined by the absence of a proper locus...The space of a tactic is the space of the other. Thus it must play on and with a terrain imposed on it and organized by the law of a foreign power...It must vigilantly make use of the cracks that particular conjunctions open in the surveillance of the proprietary powers...It is a guileful ruse. In short, a tactic is an art of the weak. (*ibid.*: 36, original emphasis)

By defining a conceptual pair as mentioned above, De Certeau further clarified the distinctions between two concepts; whereas a tactic is determined by the '*absence of power*' due to lacking its own place and a view of the whole during the combat at close quarters, a strategy is organized by the '*postulation of power*' (*ibid.*: 38, original emphasis). He concluded that:

[S]trategies are actions which, thanks to the establishment of a place of power ... elaborate theoretical places (systems and totalizing discourses) capable of articulating an ensemble of physical places in which forces are distributed...They thus privilege spatial relationships. At the very least they attempt to reduce temporal relations to spatial ones through the analytical attribution of a proper place to each particular element and through the combinatory organization of the movements specific to units or groups of units...Tactics are procedures that gain validity in relation to the pertinence they lend to time – to the circumstances which the precise instant of an intervention transforms into a favorable situation, to the rapidity of the movements that change the organization of a space, to the

relations among successive moments in an action...In this respect, the difference corresponds to two historical options regarding action and security...: strategies pin their hopes on the resistance that the *establishment of a place* offers to the erosion of time; tactics on a clever *utilization of time*, of the opportunities it presents and also of the play that it introduces into the foundations of power. (*ibid.*: 38, original emphasis)

Given the ambiguous ways by which female pupils used techniques of concealing personal music, compared to the distinct ways that male pupils dealt with their personal music in my ethnographic research in school, it can be said that the ‘otherness’ of the female, socially constructed in the school as a microcosm of patriarchy, forces female pupils to use invisible *tactics* for cloaking their personal music in front of others, in contrast to male pupils, who use visible *strategies* for negotiation and differentiation within the peer group. With regard to de Certeau’s spatial and temporal distinction, the boys seemed keen on situating themselves in conversations about popular music by means of negotiation and differentiation in the context of the mixed-gender interview, whilst the girls seemed very cautious not to be caught up in fixed positions during conversation, and tried instead to ride the flow of time. Boys developed strategies organized by the ‘postulation of power’, while girls developed tactics determined by the ‘*absence of power*’.

The same distinction between girls’ tactics and boys’ strategies for dealing with personal music in school can also be seen in the semi-formal and informal learning spaces, as I will show in Chapters 6 and 7. For de Certeau, there exists a further differentiation which is based not on places, but on another axis which can traverse from here to there.

Although they remain dependent upon the possibilities offered by circumstances, these transverse *tactics* do not obey the law of the place, for they are not defined or identified by it. In this respect, they are not any more localizable than the technocratic (and scriptural) *strategies* that seek to create places in conformity with abstract models. But what distinguishes them at the same time concerns the *types of operations* and the role of spaces: strategies are able to produce, tabulate,

and impose these spaces, when those operations take place, whereas tactics can only use, manipulate, and divert these spaces. (*ibid.*: 29, original emphasis)

There sometimes arise exchanges between boys' strategies and girls' tactics in their discourses on popular music in various settings, that evoke Ahearne's criticism of de Certeau's binarism: 'the lines which it draws are too clear-cut' (Ahearne 1995: 162). However, as virtual, heuristic categories across different learning spaces, the concepts remain pertinent to this thesis.

Japanese girls' shyness in the classroom may need further contextualisation in relation to gender issues in Japanese society. According to Iwao (1993), on the one hand, the Confucian ethic had defined the lives of Japanese women throughout many centuries, in which 'women's lives were bound by the "three obediences": obedience to fathers when young, to husbands when married, and to their children in old age' (Iwao 1993: 5). Since modernisation after the Meiji Era, the notion of the ideal woman as being '*ryōsai kenbo*' [a good wife and wise mother] has still constrained how women should behave in both their public and private lives. It is interesting that Japanologists often found the notion of '*ryōsai kenbo*' in the subcultural sphere of contemporary Japan. Robertson (1998) points out that such a model of *ryōsai kenbo* for femininity and the primacy of patriarchy affects even the sphere of art, i.e. the system of Takarazuka Revue (Robertson 1998: 14; see also p. 59 of this thesis). Yano (2002) also refers to '*ryōsai kenbo*' in her study on *enka* (see below).

On the other hand, Iwao (1993) argued that family- and group-centered norms also govern socialisation in Japan. As a result, 'women (even more than men) fail to learn in childhood to think independently...In place of independence, they develop and maintain a high degree of sensitivity to what their peers and other persons significant in their lives expect them to be and to do' (Iwao 1993: 9). She called this tendency '*nagare ni mi o makaseru*' [go with the flow], 'which describes the behavior of persons who...wish to ensure a harmonious atmosphere among their fellows' (*ibid.*: 9). This technique of Japanese women reminds us of de Certeau's idea of 'tactics on a clever *utilization of time*, of the opportunities it presents and also of the play that it introduces into the foundations of power' (de Certeau 1985: 38). Other Japanologists have similar perspectives. For example, Rosenberger (2001) focuses on group-oriented

characteristics in Japan and analyses how individual Japanese women have to deal with the ‘virtues’ which have been imposed on them throughout the cultural history of the Japanese people. It goes without saying that school is a place for the reproduction of these virtues which restrict Japanese girls to being modest and hesitant in front of boys, parents or teachers.

In the lyrics of popular music, similar gender expectations about Japanese women are also reflected. Yano (2002) analyses *enka* (see p. 81 and p. 84 of this thesis) and found that men often cry for their hometown [*furusato*]. For men, ‘[c]rying is part of life’s struggle, and tears intermingle with sweat’ (Yano 2002: 99). Meanwhile, women cry more often than their male counterparts and for different reasons. That is to say, women cry less about public issues and cry due to broken hearts, private affairs and failed romances. The differences between women’s and men’s musical practices in *enka* are far greater. According to Yano, the male singer smiles little on stage, which shows his seriousness and sincerity, although the female singer’s smileless face may indicate sad, lonely, or angry feelings. ‘What is worse, by not smiling she also commits the social sin of imposing her unhappiness on others’ (*ibid.*: 116). Moreover, as a woman is socially embedded as daughter, lover, wife or mother, especially by the historicised notion of ‘*ryōsai kenbo*’, solitary behaviour by women is interpreted as social transgressiveness (*ibid.*: 150).

It can be concluded that such cultural practices in popular music may easily force Japanese girls to be obedient and reserved. In order to escape from an imposed role model for Japanese women, girls in Japan often shut themselves in cute culture, a cute-only world where their behaviour is childlike. Kinsella (1995) regards maturity and marriage as a threat of separation from ‘*shōjo*’ [girl] (see also the footnote on p. 150). It is probable that excessive expectations on Japanese girls urge them to create idiosyncratic subcultures in Japan and other Asian countries, such as costume playing subculture or comic subculture. Further discussion of the issue of gender expectation in Japan is beyond the boundary of this study, but the aforementioned notions - ‘*ryōsai kenbo*’ role model and group-oriented tendencies – in relation to Japanese women may greatly affect girls’ discourses on popular music, particularly in school as a formal and public space.



## 5.4 Popular Music in the Brass Band Club

### 5.4.1 The Music Club in Japanese Schools

There are several music clubs in Japanese schools. In this thesis, I deal with the brass band club as an example of the formal learning space. In Chapter 6, I discuss a folk song club in school as an example of the semi-formal learning space. Before investigating how pupils as performers talk about popular music in both clubs, I will give a thumbnail sketch of extra-curricular activity in Japanese schools.

The ‘hierarchy’ of extra-curricular activity, so-called *kurabu katsudō* in Japanese high schools, is grounded in the difference between *athletic* and *cultural* clubs. Because of physical and moral training, the former are regarded much more seriously than the latter by teachers, parents and pupils. Cultural clubs are likely to be considered merely as circles for pupils to share their hobbies. According to a questionnaire survey in junior high schools in 1999, 64.9 per cent of pupils belonged to athletic clubs and 31.6 per cent belonged to cultural clubs. Whereas the bulk of male pupils belonged to the athletic clubs, the female pupils were evenly divided (Nishijima *et al.* 2000: 141). These *gendered* trends continue in high school.

One reason why parents and teachers expect boys to belong to athletic clubs is that most aim to enter pupils for national tournaments. At the yearly high school baseball championship tournament held every August, only one high school in each prefecture is admitted to the Kôshien stadium to compete for the red big pennant. This national tournament is always broadcast live on TV networks, and many success stories of professional baseball players having arisen from Kôshien have been heavily imprinted on boys’ parents (for a sociological perspective on this Kôshien tournament, see Shimizu 1998). Boys in Japan are primed for success at the national championship tournament, or to at least have the grit for hard practice in athletic clubs to prepare them for better jobs, better universities or colleges, and to conquer the hardships of life. Football, basketball, tennis and other sports clubs all aim to enter their respective national tournaments.

Despite the fact that the brass band club belongs to the group of cultural clubs, it is often described as ‘athletic’ due to its severe training as a team activity for the national contest like those of athletic clubs. For example, Shôichi Yagi reported the activity of brass band club in junior high school in Japan with irony:

Exercises are done in gym togs, because it begins from an exercise programme, so-called 'building up physical strength', that is, 10 laps of the ground, as well as 100 sit-ups and push-ups...My students who experienced the brass band activity in their junior high school age unanimously recalled that 'the ethos of brass band club equates with that of the athletic clubs'. Physical exercises in gym togs mentioned above, a strict pecking order, the severe discipline...all are associated with the athletic clubs. (Yagi 1991: 187)

Although extra-curricular activities are optional in Japanese high schools, their institutional formality still influences pupils' discourses on popular music, especially in the brass band club. Indeed, given its 'athletic' character, the discourses of the brass band club members may well reflect much severer discipline than that in the classroom. In order to explore the dynamics of pupils' discourses in broader settings at school, I interviewed members of both the brass band club (5.4) and the folk song club (6.1). Although there are choral clubs in Japanese high schools, the number of brass band clubs that are admitted to the national contest is much larger (*ibid.*: 186). In two high schools where I did my fieldwork there were no choral clubs, and in High School X, the only music club was the brass band. Meanwhile, in High School Y, there were three: the folk song club, the brass band club, and the music club, which equates to an orchestra club, with the folk song club being the biggest.

In Japan, the usual repertoire of the brass band club is classical or classically-arranged popular music, whilst that of the folk song club is Western (US-American and British) rock or J-pop. 'Folk song clubs' started in the 1970s, but changed their repertoire from Western and Western-style folk songs to rock and mainstream pop without changing their name. Given the difference of repertoire between the two clubs, it is crucial to compare them in terms of pupils' discourses on popular music in these respective spaces. In this chapter I analyse the brass band club as a formal learning space, because it is supervised and assessed, and uses legitimised knowledge, such as a set piece for the national contest. This makes a marked contrast to the folk song club that I discuss in chapter 6.

#### **5.4.2 *Boys and Popular Music in the Brass Band Club***

In July 1998, I interviewed two girls and two boys at the brass band club in High School X. They were all in Year 10 (aged 15-16). The interview was conducted in the music teacher's anteroom while others practised next door. July and August were the busiest months for brass band members, because they were rehearsing for a local preliminary contest.<sup>12</sup> When I asked Mr. Tanaka, in his role as extra-curricular teacher of the brass band club, to find volunteer interviewees for my study, he recommended first grade (Year 10) pupils because they were not yet candidates for the contest. Interviewees were generally cooperative, but when senior band members came into the anteroom to look for something, the interviewees looked guilty about missing their practice.

As the brass band club was the only music club in High School X, pupils who loved music appeared to attend it regardless of their favourite musical genres. My informants all admitted their love of music, but once again were prone to conceal their personal music in front of other members, as in the classroom. They all emphasised that they could not find time to enjoy listening to music in their private lives, and preferred to spend their weekends doing other things. However, they never complained about lack of time for enjoying their private lives, and indeed, were proud of their busy commitment to hard brass band practices. It seemed that their stoical attitude towards music practices was much stronger than that in music classrooms, to the extent that they did even not talk about 'media-popular music'<sup>13</sup> during brass band club hours. It can be said that the stoical ethos towards exercises discouraged band members from 'personalising' music in the formal learning space. Below I analyse first boys' and then girls' discourses on popular music in the brass band club.

It seemed that boys sought extra-curricular activities to which they could commit themselves, with the result that the rigours of athletic clubs were interchangeable with those of brass band exercises. Masao explained why he joined the brass band club as follows:

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<sup>12</sup> The summer vacation in Japanese schools begins in late July and ends on the 31st August.

<sup>13</sup> I use this term to indicate mainstream popular music transmitted by the mass media, especially targeted at teenagers.

[Interview 4; Masao (m), Kazushi (m), Yasue (f) and Midori (f); a music teacher's anteroom in High School X]

Masao: When I entered junior high school, I wanted to do basketball. But the basketball club did not recruit new members. So as I was hoping to do something somehow, I chose brass band club. Then I was asked to play trombone and became interested in it [.]

Here it is clear that Masao started to play in the brass band club as an alternative to athletics. For him, playing in the brass band club meant 'doing something' in his school life. Masao's orientation towards music was not influenced by brass band club members, but by his friend outside the club who loved rock. Consequently, he never sang his personal music in karaoke boxes when he was with club members.

[Interview 4]

*KK:* Why did you start to listen to music?

*Masao:* My friend influenced me.

*KK:* When did you meet your music lover friend?

*Masao:* The first year [Year 7]<sup>14</sup> in junior high school.

*KK:* Was your friend also a brass band club member?

*Masao:* No, he wasn't.

*KK:* So, what kind of music did he listen to?

*Masao:* Well, rock [pause]

*KK:* Do you also listen to rock?

*Masao:* Yes, I do.

*KK:* Do you like Western rock or Japanese rock?

*Masao:* Japanese rock.

*KK:* What artists?

*Masao:* GLAY [pause]

*KK:* Do you like visual-*kei*?

*Masao:* And L'arc~en~ciel.

*KK:* Then, do you sing their songs in karaoke?

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<sup>14</sup> In the Japanese school system, the junior high school is divided into three years; Year 7 (age 12-

*Masao:* I sing [.]

*Yasue [a girl interviewee]:* He never sings among club members.

*Midori [another girl interviewee]:* I want to hear his singing!

Although Masao appeared keen to talk about his personal music before being interrupted by the girls, they told me later that he concealed his musical taste in front of club members, and was continuing to do so in this interview.

In contrast to Masao's relatively average attitudes towards music, Kazushi was striking in the seriousness of his approach. He was full of confidence about his decision to join the brass band club, and his loyalty to the hierarchy of the club could be compared to that of students in music schools (see Nettl 1995, Chapter 2). When other members of the group interview were talking about 'visual pop', which was the most popular genre at that time, Kazushi interrupted by claiming allegiance to the 'natural music' of a 'guitar band':

[Interview 4]

*Kazushi:* I like natural music [*boku wa nachuraru nano ga suki*].

*KK:* Do you?

*Midori:* I like *Misu-chiru*'s [CD-ROM, Track 2] earlier songs.

*Kazushi:* You know, their songs have become much cheekier [*konamaiki*] these days. Or, say, being dishonest [*sunao ja nai*] [.]

Kazushi concealed his musical tastes, by vague references to 'natural music' (opposite to dishonest music [*sunao ja nai*]), and even when he showed appreciation for *Misu-chiru*, who were popular amongst his contemporaries, he was also critical of them, and never mentioned what artists he actually liked. By the same token, he denied *Komuro-kei* (for an example of *Komuro-kei* artists, CD-ROM, Track 20),<sup>15</sup> saying that the music of Tetsuya Komuro, who was the leading producer and composer in the middle 1990s, was not good because of his dependence on clichés [*min'na onaji yashi...*].

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13), Year 8 (13-14) and Year 9 (14-15).

<sup>15</sup> Although *Komuro-kei* was one of the most important genre of J-pop in the 1990s, as its peak year was in the middle 1990s, I did not establish it as a genre in Chapter 4. Musically, *Komuro-kei* was based on memorable melodies with a dance beat, which aimed at the consumers who went to either *karaoke* boxes or discotheques. In 1998, many songs composed by Komuro were still very

Kazushi's strategies for dodging my questions in the brass band club setting became much clearer when I asked him how he became interested in music.

[Interview 4]

KK: Whose influence was important for your love of music?

Kazushi: I believe that I innately love music, but if there was, a teacher, my music teacher.

KK: Your music teacher, when?

Kazushi: The person who most influenced me was an extra-curricular teacher of the brass band club in junior high school, whom I respect most.

Of interest here is that Kazushi interpreted 'the most *influential* person' as 'the most *respected* person' in his public rather than his personal musical life. Kazushi's personal music seemed to be repertoires for brass band, to which he seemed to be much more devoted than other members. However, when I had a chat with him in a classroom and asked him what instrument he played, he told me 'Tuba. To be honest, I wanted to play drums at first'. So, I attempted to confirm his first wish for an instrument, but later in the interview at the brass band club, he changed the word 'drums' to the more classically-oriented 'percussion', and never told me what made him interested in playing drums before he joined the brass band club.

Moreover, his basic stance on media-popular music was as follows:

[Interview 4]

KK: In what ways do you gather information on popular music?

Kazushi: I've never read magazines.

KK: So, do you ask somebody?

Kazushi: I seldom listen to popular music itself.

KK: You mean, you do not usually listen to any music, do you?

Kazushi: Yes, I do [...] at home.

KK: Except popular music, what kind of music do you listen to?

Kazushi: I like computer games, so I compose game music [...]

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popular in *karaoke*.

Although he mentioned ‘game’ and ‘composing game music’ as his hobby, I was unable to tease out his personal music, which he was much more reticent about than other pupils in the classroom setting.

#### **5.4.3 *Girls and Popular Music in the Brass Band Club***

Midori looked hesitant when I asked her to kick off the interview by talking about her favourite music, but when I shifted my questions to others about their instrumental experiences, she started to talk.

[Interview 4; Masao (m), Kazushi (m), Yasue (f) and Midori (f); a music teacher’s anteroom in High School X]

*KK:* Do you have any favourite artists?

*Midori:* Not particularly [pause]

*KK:* So [...] what instrument do you play?

*Midori:* Trumpet.

*KK:* Trumpet, have you played it since junior high school?

*Midori:* Yes, since I was in the first year [Year 7].

*KK:* Did you start to play it because you wanted to?

*Midori:* I hoped to play flute, but there was the only one place available, so I didn’t mind if I played trumpet.

*KK:* Do you like trumpet now?

*Midori:* Yes.

Another girl member, Yasue talked confidently about her instrumental experiences.

[Interview 4]

*KK:* What instrument do you play?

*Yasue:* Same as her [Midori].

*KK:* Same? Trumpet? When did you start to play?

*Yasue:* Since the first year [Year 7] in junior high school. Well, I attended a youth music band when I was elementary school pupil and played bass clarinet. But it lacks melody, doesn’t it? So I longed to play trumpet.

Yasue was well aware that her love of music had been influenced by her elder sister, who had taken up the bass clarinet before her, and consequently acted as a role model. Yasue is quite typical in this respect, for whereas boys tend to be influenced by their peer groups, girls' musical attitudes are much more influenced by their family members (see also pp. 106-109 for an earlier discussion of this).

Yasue seemed more interested in the interview when the topic shifted to broader genres of popular music. Although she emphasised her lack of time after school to watch TV music programmes, her knowledge of media-popular music was substantial compared to other brass band club members. She explained how she gathered this information:

[Interview 4]

*KK:* How do you gather information on popular music?

*Yasue:* Occasionally, when I have free time, I go to a CD rental shop. You know, there is a charts corner in it. So, first of all, I check it. Or I listen to *Myu-para* [*Music Paradise*].<sup>16</sup>

It is interesting that her way of gathering information on media-popular music was close to that of adults such as music teachers and myself. Her brass band commitments left her little time, so she chose this economical way to keep up with the popular music charts. Charts music functioned as 'common music' among Yasue's non-club friends.

Yasue's awareness of charts music kept her on good terms with non-members of the brass band club. For female members, karaoke provided another means for keeping up with their friends' taste for media-popular music. In the brass band club setting, Midori suggested that the karaoke repertoire defined 'common music' among her friends:

[Interview 4]

*KK:* Do you like music classes?

*Midori:* Not really, I don't like singing.

*KK:* Don't you? So, do you go to karaoke?

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<sup>16</sup> *Music Paradise* is a popular AM radio programme among younger and middle teenagers, at least



Midori: Yes, I do.

KK: What songs do you sing?

Midori: In karaoke? Many songs [pause]

KK: For example, whose songs do you sing?

Midori: Well [pause]

KK: Which one do you often sing?

Midori: ELT.

KK: Every Little Thing [a Japanese popular group whose songs are popular as karaoke repertoires], isn't it? Do you like Komuro-*kei*?

Midori: It's included, too.

When Midori said 'it's included, *too*', she implied that there were other popular groups that she really liked, but she never mentioned her favourite artists in front of other members. As in the classroom setting, I found it very difficult, or even impossible to find out girls' favourite personal artists in this brass band club setting. Here again, boys' strategies for differentiation as well as girls' tactics for making use of common music succeeded in distracting my intention to disclose their personal music in the formal learning space.

#### ***5.4.4 A Change of the Same Individual's Discourse in Different Settings***

I had an opportunity for a short interview with Yasue and her female peers in the classroom, whilst Mr. Tanaka give rhythm tests to individual pupils in the corridor. Surprisingly, Yasue showed her knowledge of visual pop/rock much more confidently there than in the brass band club setting, and seemed to be as much of a media-popular enthusiast as her friends.

In his school ethnography, Richards noticed that 'it was important to have statements made by the same individuals but in different situations and thus to be able to identify contrasts in their self-accounts and in their references to various kinds of music' (Richards 1998a: 196). Only by comparing the discourse of Yasue in the brass band setting with that in the peer group setting can we understand the restrictive nature of the former. To understand Yasue's discourse in the female subcultural peer group

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in part because of its charts hour.

context, I quote a long transcript below.

[Interview 5; Misato (f), Reiko (f), Kiyomi (f) and Yasue (f); music classroom in High School X]

*KK:* What artist do you like?

*Misato:* *Dori-Camu* [Dreams Come True, CD-ROM, Track 1].

*KK:* Do you sing their songs in karaoke?

*Misato:* Yes.

*KK:* How do you find this music class?

*Misato:* [pause] feel interesting.

*Kiyomi:* Interesting.

*KK:* How were music classes in junior high school?

*Kiyomi:* [unsatisfactorily] Singing only.

*KK:* So what kinds of music do you want to learn?

*Reiko:* Guitar.

*KK:* Do you have a guitar?

*Reiko:* Electric guitar, 'cause I used to play in a band.

*KK:* Do you?

*Reiko:* But I quit.

*KK:* Did you play in junior high school?

*Reiko:* Yeah. [to Misato] What are you talking about?

*Misato:* Favourite music or [.]

*Reiko:* I like Revolu.

*KK:* What?

*Reiko:* T.M. Revolution [categorised as visual pop/rock].

*KK:* I see, Nishikawa-*kun*,<sup>17</sup> isn't it?

*Reiko:* Yeah. [and showed me his picture in the back of her student ID card holder]

*KK:* What kinds of music did you copy in a band?

*Reiko:* *Misu-chiru* [a guitar band, CD-ROM, Track 2].

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<sup>17</sup> Nishikawa-kun (Takanori Nishikawa) is a vocalist of TM Revolution. Although T.M. Revolution is categorised as visual pop/rock, Nishikawa-kun is regarded as an idol boy singer among his female fans. 'Kun' is a Japanese suffix used to expression affection towards younger boys.

KK: *Misu-chiru*. And do you go to Nishikawa-kun's concerts?

Reiko: I was wanting to [...] but I couldn't get tickets.

KK: Don't you join his fan club?

Reiko: No. I joined *Misu-chiru*'s fan club. I used to [...] but as soon as I joined, it broke up.

KK: But [...] I think that T.M. Revolution and *Misu-chiru* are very different from each other [...]

Reiko: I suddenly fell in love with T.M. [Revolution].

KK: Which do you like, singing or playing instruments?

Kiyomi: Playing instruments [...] like jazz, for example, Glenn Miller [Orchestra].

Misato: I want to sing with a grand back chorus.

KK: How about visual pop/rock such as Luna Sea [CD-ROM, Track 11] or [...]

Misato: GLAY [CD-ROM, Track 13] and [...]

Yasue: I don't like them.

KK: Oh, do you detest them?

Yasue: I hate Luna Sea and [...] above all, I hate Penicillin [visual pop/rock band, temporarily popular in 1998] the worst! That voice of the vocalist [...]

Reiko: An upside-down voice [*koe hikkurikaettômon*], they are 'falsetto-kei' [*uragoe-kei*].

KK: Do boys like Luna Sea more than girls in this school?

Reiko: I like Ryûichi [the vocalist of Luna Sea].<sup>18</sup>

KK: So whom can you tolerate?

Yasue: X [X Japan, CD-ROM, Track 10] [...]

Reiko: X [X Japan], they are good, aren't they?

KK: How about Hide [the guitarist of X Japan. After the break-up of the band, Hide continued his career as a soloist; however, in May 1998, he committed suicide]?

Reiko: Let's see [...] I found 'Pink Spider' [one of Hide's hit songs as a soloist] cute.

KK: And how about La'cryma Christi or Sham Shade [both bands are categorised as visual pop/rock]?

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<sup>18</sup> I will discuss his influence on Japanese boy performers in Chapter 6.

Yasue: Ah, not bad [.]

KK: Do you listen to radio?

Reiko: Yeah.

Misato: I listen to 1314.

KK: Asahi Broadcasting Corporation?

Reiko: Osaka Broadcasting Corporation,<sup>19</sup> isn't it? *Bun-bun Request*<sup>20</sup> or [.]

Misato: Yeah.

Yasue: I like Masayoshi Yamasaki.

KK: Guitar-*kei*, isn't it?

Yasue: Yes, definitely.

Thus finally, not in the brass band club, but in the classroom setting, I succeeded in teasing out an example of Yasue's personal music: Masayoshi Yamasaki, a popular musician in the guitar band style. Despite her 'lack of time to watch TV because of hard exercises', Yasue had plenty of knowledge about up-to-date mainstream popular music to the extent of being able to discriminate between artists within visual pop/rock. Indeed, although X Japan was famous amongst ordinary music fans, Penicillin and La'cryma Christi were bands of which only enthusiastic visual pop/rock listeners were aware. The only concrete name which Yasue mentioned as her favourite in the brass band club setting was Leonardo DiCaprio, who is not a musician, but a 'safe' film star, who was idolised by Japanese girls in 1998. Even when other members of the brass band club talked about Mr. Children, a representative guitar band, and Midori showed her interest in *Misu-chiru*, Yasue kept her preference for guitar music secret in front of other club members.

One possible reason for this change of Yasue's discourse in a different setting was that Reiko had given relatively spontaneous discourses on her personal music in the classroom, investigating a freer atmosphere than that in the brass band setting, and thereby influencing Yasue to talk about popular music more freely. Moreover, as members of Yasue's peer group had very different musical tastes from each other (diva-*kei*, visual pop/rock, guitar band, big band), she seemed to feel much easier about revealing her musical taste in front of others. Not only the ideology of learning spaces,

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<sup>19</sup> Both Asahi and Osaka Broadcasting Corporation are AM radio stations in Kansai area.

but also the political relationships among interviewees determine pupils' discourses about popular music.

Nonetheless, Yasue's negative attitude towards mainstream popular music, especially visual pop/rock, the most popular sub-style in 1998, drew a clear line between herself and other girls. Furthermore, although the other three girls, particularly Reiko, seemed enthusiastic about disclosing their personal music, Yasue was still unwilling to talk about her personal music to me, a 'stranger' in the school. Indeed, Yasue was the last girl to disclose her personal music in the classroom interview. She seemed to prefer criticising visual pop/rock rather than talking about her own personal music. It is possible that Yasue's sarcasm and caution came from her long experience of instrumental training, through which she had learned to discriminate good and bad music. Nevertheless, it was also likely that Yasue was much more sensitive about being assessed on the basis of her musical tastes. Yasue's unwillingness to reveal her personal music in the brass band setting was similar to the tactics of other girls in the guitar class (see 5.3.2).

## 5.5 Summary

In this chapter, three categories of popular music, that is, 'personal music', 'common music' and 'standard music' have been discussed as important findings of my ethnographic study. The fact that there exists such a clear categorisation of popular music in school is crucial to this study. In music classes, boys as listeners tended to make use of the 'common music' of their peer group or others' 'personal music' as a means of differentiating their own personal music from that of others. So, the dynamics of male peer identity successfully embrace a foreign element, in the case of my interview, a non-visual pop/rock listener amongst visual pop/rock listeners. Boys were clearly able to balance their private musical tastes with those of their peers by means of incessant negotiation, in order to position their personal musical identity with reference to others' personal music and the common music of their subcultural peer group.

By contrast, girl listeners in class tended not to disclose their personal music in public, mentioning 'safe artists', or replying 'anything' to disguise their own musical

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<sup>20</sup> A popular radio programme among younger and middle teenagers, likewise *Music Paradise*.

tastes. They also concealed their 'personal music' in the classroom context by keeping 'others' at a discreet distance, saying 'I *used to* listen', and claiming allegiance to 'common music' or 'standard music'. Through these tactics, they succeeded in hiding the personal music to which they were deeply committed at that moment. Moreover, in the classroom context, girls sometimes could not articulate their musical experiences in everyday life. In addition, the girls were likely to rely on 'common music' as a tool for confirming a sense of group solidarity, whilst at once concealing their personal music. Meanwhile, in the choral contest, 'standard music' enjoyed its status as mutual knowledge to both pupils' and teachers' generations. In particular, girls were prone to be under the influence of their mothers and to rely on 'standard music' as inherited capital. The difference between boys' and girls' techniques can be divided into two kinds: 'strategies' and 'tactics', as discriminated by de Certeau.

As an example of boy and girl performers in the formal learning space, I also analysed how members of the brass band club talked about popular music. Whereas boy performers either avoided giving a detailed description of an influential person in their personal lives, or acted as a good pupil by selecting an appropriate aspect of their public musical experience, girl performers made use of common music such as charts music or karaoke repertoire in order to hide their personal music.

## Chapter 6

### Popular Music, Musical Practice and Gender in the Semi-formal Learning Space

#### 6.1 Popular Music in the Folk Song Club

##### 6.1.1 *High School Y and its Folk Song Club*

In this chapter I analyse boys' and girls' discourses on popular music in the semi-formal space. Firstly, as the opposite of the brass band club discussed in Chapter 5, I would like to discuss a folk song club setting. From October 2000 to February 2001, I did my fieldwork in High School Y in Osaka Prefecture. As I explained in Chapter 5, in High School Y, there were three music clubs: the folk song club which was the biggest, the brass band club, and the music club. The last was really a predominantly girls' classical chamber orchestra.

In contrast to High School X, High School Y had a much freer atmosphere. This is not to suggest that High School X had very severe discipline. Indeed, it was the envy of both parents and pupils in Hyogo Prefecture because of its free atmosphere. However, I found High School Y much more progressive insofar as teachers avoided interfering, there was no school uniform, and the extra-curricular teacher was particularly understanding. I will explain these features one by one.

Firstly, pupils themselves were allowed to decide how they behaved in school. A biology teacher explained this democratic way of education, saying 'after all, the self-administration of the pupil matters. I suppose other high schools in Osaka will gradually follow our freer direction. I believe they must follow'. Other teachers seemed to think in the same way and most trusted pupils unconditionally. Pupils were even allowed to do part-time jobs or ride motorbikes. The only taboos I found during observation were smoking and alcohol, both of which are prohibited for people under 20 by law in Japan. It is likely that these teachers' hands-off policy encouraged pupils to make full use of their everyday knowledge in school.

The second reason for the relatively free atmosphere relates to the first. Although most state high schools in Osaka Prefecture impose school uniform on their pupils, 10 allow a free dress code. High School Y is one of those 'progressive' schools.

Since 1998, it has allowed pupils to wear what they like in school. Consequently, because so many pupils wore make-up, hairdye and earrings, they seemed more like college students or working people. Most of the male pupils in this school used hairdye and a quarter of them had pierced ears; almost all of the female pupils made up and most of them also had pierced ears. As Richards noticed at a non-uniform school that he observed, 'students were, to some extent, *allowed* to maintain continuity between out-of-school identities and their self-presentation through dress in school' (Richards 1998a: 189). In this school, I found it easier to talk about popular music with pupils in everyday clothes, particularly with members of the folk song club which was organised by popular music enthusiasts. Furthermore, and this is the third liberal feature of High School Y, the extra-curricular teacher of the folk song club, Ms. Watanabe was widely respected for her knowledge and experience of band activities. Although she was not a music teacher, but a physics teacher, she had been involved in band activities since she was a university student. Ms. Watanabe followed the hands-off policy towards pupils at High School Y, only directing club members when they begged for her help. Her support consisted of supplying instruments and organising bands. Even then her approach was minimal. She commented 'I hope that members buy a guitar or bass guitar, because they make progress much quicker with their own instruments. But I have to supply a keyboard, as pupils who had only practiced piano or electric organ can not set a keyboard by themselves'. Meanwhile, she arranged new bands for the first year (Year 10) novices and sometimes helped to resolve discord in bands. Only when it was absolute necessary, would she organise new bands for the second (Year 11) or third year (Year 12) members. Club members benefited tremendously from her support.

I thought the folk song club in High School Y was very favoured until Ms. Watanabe complained of a lack of understanding of the school towards the folk song club:

[Interview 6; Ms. Watanabe (f); playground at High School Y]

Without performance by the folk song club, a school festival can't become lively. Considering its contribution, I have been disappointed that the school shows no interest in the folk song club. The school provides a half of the expense to prepare



a PA system for the school festival at the moment. But in order to participate in the school festival, club members have to cover the other half of the expense on a per-capita basis. I believe the school should have covered all the expense.

Ms. Watanabe also protected club members from other teachers' complaints about their ill manners. Thus, in addition to her useful advice and her experience of playing in a band, her 'maternalistic' attitude towards club members made the folk song club in High School Y possible.

I attended Ms. Watanabe's gig in February 2001. She was the only female member in her band, and, with make-up, funny sunglasses and a wig, was splendidly transformed from an everyday school teacher into a strange, theatrical presence on stage. Her musical expression was excellent, and her natural chest voice was similar to Akiko Yano, a famous Japanese female pop singer. Many pupils of High School Y attended the gig and were astonished at her creative power. A US-American visitor said 'I envy pupils of High School Y. If such a liberal teacher had taught us, I would have liked school'. Through most situations, I found that Ms. Watanabe's liberal attitudes and her belief in the significance of band activity allowed the folk song club to prosper.

As elucidated in 5.4, whereas the usual repertoire of brass band clubs is classical music or classically-arranged popular music, that of the folk song club is US-American and British rock or J-pop. Folk song clubs started playing Western and then Western-style folk songs in school in the 1970s, but shifted their repertoire to rock and mainstream pop. The name of the club remained in the school in order to avoid censure, since, as discussed in 5.2, folk song is legitimised as standard music by teachers, whereas rock or mainstream pop is not. In contrast to the formal character of the brass band club, in which supervision and formal assessment guarantee legitimate knowledge, the folk song club is semi-formal in character, insofar as it focusses on the non-legitimate knowledge of rock and J-pop, and yet involves teacher- and outsider-evaluation. Therefore, I categorise the brass band club as a formal learning space, while the folk song club is semi-formal.

The folk song club was by far the most popular music club at High School Y; the music club's chamber orchestra demanded intimidating musical skills; the choral club

broke up ten years ago, and the brass band club was much smaller. Moreover, the folk song club had a strong tradition of productive activity. Indeed, I knew the name of High School Y through observing the high school pupils' band event in 1998, that I mention later in this chapter (6.2). One of the participating bands showed great musical talent and most of its members belonged to the folk song club at High School Y, so its name was inscribed in my memory. When I asked Ms. Watanabe for permission to visit the folk song club in 2000, she welcomed me and I found it to be the best choice for pupils who wanted to play music in High School Y.

### **6.1.2 Boys and Popular Music in the Folk Song Club**

#### *The Millennium Band*

Ms. Watanabe introduced me to several bands in the folk song club at a school festival in October 2000. She explained to me that there were many promising members in the club in 1998, and after their graduation, club activities had declined a little. At this time she said that the 'Millennium Band' was the most industrious, and that they intended to perform original songs after the school festival finished. The Millennium Band consisted of four members: a girl vocalist, and a male guitarist, bassist and drummer. On stage, they played pieces from Judy and Mary (*Judi-mari*, CD-ROM, Track 6),<sup>1</sup> Hysteria Blue (*Hisu-buru*)<sup>2</sup> and L'arc~en~ciel. In this section, I analyse the three boys' discourses in the individual interviews.

Takuya was in the second year (Year 11), and started playing drums because an ex-vocalist of the Millennium Band invited him to join.

[Interview 7; Takuya (m); playground at High School Y]

KK: How did you join the club?

Takuya: One of my friends invited me.

KK: A friend, what did your friend do?

Takuya: She's a vocalist.

KK: A vocalist, isn't she Keiko [a current vocalist of the Millennium Band]?

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<sup>1</sup> Judy and Mary, which broke up on March 2001, was a representative 'girlish' Japanese popular band which included a female vocalist, Yuki, and three males. Its soft rock has been popular among both-sexes copy band members as well as with young girls and couples.

<sup>2</sup> Hysteria Blue, in which the girl vocalist sings with two males, is very similar to Judy and Mary, in its healthy and high-spirited, or sometimes coquettish messages.

*Takuya:* An ex-vocalist. She invited me to do music together and I started playing drums, 'cause there was no drummer. At last, she asked me to play drums.

*KK:* Before that, did you play other instruments?

*Takuya:* No, nothing.

*KK:* How about in junior high school?

*Takuya:* In junior high school, I did nothing. After my first year's [Year 10] school festival finished, I started playing drums. So, it's only 10 months or a year [.]

*KK:* Did you originally like music? How about when you were a junior high school pupil?

*Takuya:* I liked to listen to it.

*KK:* What types of music did you like?

*Takuya:* Let's see, what songs [.]

*KK:* Did you like *hōgaku* [Japanese popular] or *yōgaku* [Western European popular]?

*Takuya:* How can I put it [.] you know, there is top 10 music.

*KK:* I see.

*Takuya:* I listened to these kinds of music.

*KK:* Were they *yōgaku*?

*Takuya:* Nope, very ordinary [.] Japanese pop.

It was only through this dialogue that I believed Takuya's personal music to be J-pop, very vague as an index of his musical taste. Indeed, to begin with, I thought that Takuya seemed not to be interested in music much at all.

[Interview 7]

*KK:* Do you opt for music class?

*Takuya:* Yes, I do.

*KK:* How about it?

*Takuya:* In music class, there is the other genre of music, say, classical music.

*KK:* Are you interested in it?

*Takuya:* I don't know [.]

*KK:* You don't know [.] is it useful?

*Takuya:* Ah [.] I don't know about that.

*KK:* I see [.] so you opt for it somehow, don't you.

*Takuya:* Yeah.

*KK:* Do you hope to continue to play music?

*Takuya:* Ah [.] I've never thought on the issue.

*KK:* So, what is music for you?

*Takuya:* Let's see [pause] feeling comfortable.

*KK:* Feeling comfortable [.] Don't you feel uplifted?

*Takuya:* I like to be excited, but when I play with drumsticks, I feel happy.

I felt that Takuya was dodging my questions. However, as the interviews went on, he gradually disclosed his personal musical.

[Interview 7]

*KK:* Do you go to clubs or gigs?

*Takuya:* Of other members?

*KK:* Yes, of friends or [.]

*Takuya:* Occasionally, I do.

*KK:* What kinds of gigs did you attend?

*Takuya:* Let's see [.] so-called visual-*kei*, most of all.

*KK:* Visual-*kei*, were the bands famous?

*Takuya:* No, still not famous [.] my seniors played in them.

*KK:* Do they? Are there any famous visual-*kei* musicians in this school?

*Takuya:* Ah [.] they have already graduated from the school and go to a vocational college and have become very good musicians.

*KK:* So, do you want to play visual rock in your band? Today [school festival day], you played very different kinds of music from visual-*kei*, didn't you?

*Takuya:* Yeah, you are right. Very different repertoire. But sometimes I feel like playing [.] visual rock.

But there were difficulties with playing visual rock in the Millennium Band, which, as I explain later, discouraged him from disclosing his personal music in the extra-curricular activity setting.

Tetsurô, who was in the second year (Year 11), did not tell me how he started playing guitar in the interview. It was only after my visit to their practice room that he told me that like Takuya, he was also invited by the ex-vocalist of the Millennium Band. As Tetsurô seemed very shy and sensitive compared to the other two boy members of the band, I could not tease out much information from him. The only remarkable dialogue was during the first interview:

[Interview 8; Tetsurô (m); playground at High School Y]

KK: Of what artists do you buy CDs?

Tetsurô: CDs [...] I usually buy *L'arc* (*L'arc~en~ciel*, the then visual band, CD-ROM, Track 14).

KK: You like *L'arc*.

Tetsurô: And *Hai-suta* [High Standard, a punk rock band which is very popular among teenage boys' copy bands in Japan].

KK: I see [...] on what point do you like *L'arc*?

Tetsurô: Let's see [...] the music. Their music catches my ears.

KK: When you listen to music, which do you listen to, the melody or the rhythm?

Tetsurô: The melody.

KK: Melodies [...] how about the words of songs?

Tetsurô: I don't put importance on words.

Tetsurô's preference for melody was very clear during his guitar practice and also the Millennium Band's choice of music for their school festival performance. Later, whilst observing their group practices, I noticed that the other two members, Takuya and Wataru, were very concerned about Tetsurô's musical orientation. As the guitarist usually stamps their identity on a rock band, the other members could not ignore Tetsurô's musical tastes, which unfortunately were very different from their own. I began to realise why the Millennium Band played *L'arc~en~ciel* on stage.

L'arc~en~ciel was formerly a visual rock band,<sup>3</sup> and therefore provided a compromise between Tetsurô's tastes and that of the other two members who desperately wanted to play visual rock.

The third boy, Wataru, was the only third year (Year 12) member in the Millennium Band. He started playing bass guitar after he entered High School Y. Before that, he did nothing, like Takuya. It can be said that to start playing in a band gives boys a good chance to 'reset' their school life, or make it more meaningful.

[Interview 9; Wataru (m); playground at High School Y]

*KK:* Did you play music in junior high school?

*Wataru:* No, I have been playing since I entered the high school.

*KK:* How did you start it?

*Wataru:* Ah [...] one of my friends invited me to play guitar.

*KK:* Is that friend a member of the current band?

*Wataru:* No, I've experienced the change of bands and members several times. I am in the third year [Year 12].

*KK:* Oh, really?

*Wataru:* And I did play original songs (proudly).

Wataru's seniority to the other members of the Millennium band showed in his relaxed manner during the interview, which enabled him to talk with me spontaneously about music. Or perhaps he felt a little lonely with the younger members of the band and was looking for somebody to listen to his story. Wataru seemed happy to talk about his musical experiences and thoughts on various aspects of playing in the band. In addition, his musical activities outside school gave him an advantage to talk about popular music more confidentially than other members in the school. He explained why he joined the school band and what he did before:

[Interview 9]

*Wataru:* The previous band to which I belonged broke up, so I had to look for another band to play on the stage of the school festival.

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<sup>3</sup> They quitted to play as a visual rock band in 1999 because they were angry about the 'visual-*kei*'

KK: That's why you joined this band.

Wataru: They let me join it.

KK: So, what musical genres do you like in everyday life?

Wataru: In the past, I loved *visual-kei*.

KK: *Visual-kei*, is it L'arc~en~ciel [CD-ROM, Track 14]?

Wataru: Luna Sea [a representative visual rock band, CD-ROM, Track 11].

KK: Luna Sea [.]

Wataru: Definitely. Ah, is L'arc [L'arc~en~ciel] still visual rock?

KK: I suppose they *were*.

Wataru: I agree with you. They are now a rock band, aren't they?

KK: I think so, too.

Wataru: So, can I say that other members like rock?

KK: I don't know [.] actually, other members said that they like L'arc.

Wataru: Yeah.

KK: Is L'arc common among members? How about *Judi-mari* [Judy and Mary, CD-ROM, Track 6]?

Wataru: We played it [Judy and Mary] 'cause the vocalist is a girl.

KK: I see. You can easily copy them.

Wataru: That's it.

In order to reconcile each member's musical orientation with their group's composition, Judy and Mary or Hysteric Blue, all of which have female singers, provided a common music for the band. Wataru called Judy and Mary and Hysteric Blue 'female bands' thereby discriminating them from 'male bands' such as Luna Sea, on the basis of whether the vocalist was female or male. As Keiko, the vocalist of the Millennium Band was a girl, its repertoire had to concentrate on songs from 'female bands'.

L'arc~en~ciel, which had previously been a visual rock band, also functioned as common music to bridge the gap between male band-oriented members (Takuya and Wataru) and female band-oriented members (Tetsurô and Keiko). Although the vocalist of L'arc~en~ciel, Hyde, is male, Keiko liked to follow his high range and Tetsurô

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label which the mass media had put on them thereby being defiant from their musical quality.

preferred L'arc~en~ciel to Luna Sea, L'arc~en~ciel was regarded as an extension of a 'female band' by male band-oriented members Takuya and Wataru. Visual rock enthusiasts felt betrayed by L'arc~en~ciel, when they quitted visual rock, and their change to a 'non-visual' rock band exacerbated the opposition between male and female bands. Wataru's unwillingness to join the school band as a compromise 'to play on the stage of the school festival' had been facilitated by this crack of musical orientation in the band.

Wataru was aware that the Millennium Band was unlikely to survive.

[Interview 9]

*KK:* As you are in the third year [Year 12],<sup>4</sup> I suppose that you have to think about going to a college or getting a job.

*Wataru:* I can't graduate from school [...] I have to repeat my third year [Year 12].

*KK:* Really?

*Wataru:* Yeah.

*KK:* So, do you hope to continue your club activity?

*Wataru:* Yeah, I hope so.

*KK:* Do you wish to become a professional musician?

*Wataru:* I wish so.

*KK:* Do you?

*Wataru:* But I don't know whether the other three members think so or not.

*KK:* The other three said that they wish if they have a chance to become a musician [...] so do you want to make original songs seriously?

*Wataru:* No, 'cause other members in this band will go to colleges. I'm an exception. I will not go to a college. I'll try to make a living from playing music. Perhaps, the other three will look for new band members at college.

*KK:* Well [...] so, what will you do?

*Wataru:* I am looking for another band to join. No, I haven't looked yet, but I want to.

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<sup>4</sup> The third year is the final year in high school in Japan.



KK: Do you plan to attend a music audition in the near future?

Wataru: No.

KK: In that case, do you plan to join new band peers?

Wataru: That's not so easy. First of all, I have to ask the other three members.

KK: Well.

Wataru: I've never asked them about our future.

KK: Why don't you ask them, as the school festival has just finished?

Wataru: I dunno. When I asked a bit about that, they said that they will look for new members at college, or [...] each member said different things. But all will go to college. Perhaps, our current band exists merely until the end of the third year [Year 12]. It only continues until graduation. It can exist only within high school [...]

His 'cool', disinterested discourse on the band was in part because he thought the Millennium Band would only last '*until graduation*'.<sup>5</sup>

According to my ethnographic research of boy performers in various settings, one of the most important turning points of their band activities is when they outgrow copy bands and create 'original' songs. Wataru was unwilling to perform his original songs with the Millennium Band, saying 'I'm reluctant to play my original songs in this band. I will consider playing original songs in another band'. This was another strategy that Wataru used to distance himself from the band, alongside insisting on his personal music and denying the repertoire of female bands as their common music.

Wataru's musical ambitions appeared to have derived from his previous band experience (for similar cases in England, see Green 2001: 74). However, he was by no means content with this previous band, which broke up because of a disagreement about its musical orientation. Although Wataru's personal music was visual rock, especially X Japan, his previous band followed Mr. Children, a guitar band (CD-ROM, Track 2). It seems common for rock bands to break up because of such a discrepancy between each member's personal music and their common music which should be shared by all (see Bennett 1980; Cohen 1991; Green 2001). Wataru loved visual rock and had complicated feelings about his previous band.

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<sup>5</sup> As its name suggests, the 'Millennium Band' was named for the school festival in 2000.

[Interview 9]

*KK:* Do you opt for music class?

*Wataru:* No. I have been interested in music only after I entered school.

*KK:* What did you do before you become interested in music? Did you join the athletic club?

*Wataru:* What did I do [...] ah, I played games. I was a 'gamer'.<sup>6</sup>

*KK:* In that case, did you like game music?

*Wataru:* No. I wasn't interested in music at all. I'd never bought a CD until I became a third year [Year 9] in junior high school.

*KK:* So, what artist did you like first when your friend invited you to play music?

*Wataru:* X Japan.

*KK:* X Japan.

*Wataru:* At first, I bought a guitar.

*KK:* Whom did you like in X Japan?

*Wataru:* Yoshiki. I bought a guitar and made my mind to 'do guitar', 'cause guitar is very cool in the music of X Japan.

*KK:* I think they were really a great rock band.

*Wataru:* Then, I played guitar. But my friend also played guitar. So he asked me to play bass guitar and I bought one.

*KK:* It's a pity that your previous band broke up.

*Wataru:* It's no use crying over it. First of all, our musical orientations were very different from each other.

*KK:* What do you mean?

*Wataru:* I really loved visual rock at that time when I joined the previous band. But it played only Mr. Children [CD-ROM, Track 2] thing [...]

*KK:* Mr. Children, a guitar band.

*Wataru:* Yeah. I didn't like them at all.

*KK:* Right.

*Wataru:* So, I said 'I want to quit'.

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<sup>6</sup> See the footnote to p. 108.

*KK:* Then, what happened?

*Wataru:* They broke up.

*KK:* I see. Your musical roots came from X Japan, didn't they?

*Wataru:* Yeah. The roots are very different from them.

For Wataru, the benefit of joining the band at school was that he could use a practice room, rather than pay for an expensive private studio. Sometimes Wataru seemed comfortable playing bass with the Millennium Band, although in January 2001 he had joined another band with their older, original and visual rock elements that he missed, but he found their female vocalist so incompetent that he soon left.

In addition to the individual interview above, I also observed the everyday practices of the Millennium Band in a practice room of the folk song club. In this setting, boy performers talked about their musical orientation informally, which enabled me to analyse how the gap between their personal music and their common music became bigger during their practice sessions. Before beginning my fieldwork in High School Y, I expected a well-equipped practice room, like that used by the brass band club members in High School X with the help of Mr. Tanaka. But the practice room of the folk song club in High School Y was on the edge of the playground, next to the storehouses of the football club and baseball club. In the winter, when I observed their practices, the wind blew through the cracks, but the band members got very hot through playing and did not mind that. The equipment was a shaky drum kit, a dusty keyboard and a very old amplifier. Out of respect for the hands-off policy of High School Y and Ms. Watanabe, I tried not to interfere in their practices as much as possible during my observations.

Takuya's interest in music had grown rapidly by February 2001. He practised seriously, always beginning with athletic stretching exercises. Although his personal music in the interview in October 2000 was very vague such as 'J-pop' or 'visual-*kei*', Takuya had gradually become interested in Luna Sea and other Japanese and foreign rock bands. His determination to 'play drums much better' was rewarded by rapid improvement, and his knowledge of popular music increased the extent to which he could look for new pieces to teach to the other members of the band. As he did not have a drum kit in his home, the practice room was the only place for him to practise

drums (see also Green 2001: 146), which alone contributed to his being the most enthusiastic band member.

His role model was an old drummer at the club who went to a music vocational college after graduation. He fostered rivalry with the first year (Year 10) drummer in the club, and the differentiation among visual rock groups was so crucial for both him and Wataru that they showed contempt for the first year members of the folk song club when they practised Shazna's<sup>7</sup> 'Melly Love' (CD-ROM, Track 15), saying 'those first year guys are playing Shazna's "Melly Love". I'm disgusted with it'. Thus, Takuya had finally become an enthusiast for rock music like Wataru. Despite the fact that he wanted to study English at university, in February 2001 Takuya visited the vocational college for popular music, where his icon drummer went, and said that he might opt for studying popular music in the future.

Unlike Wataru, Tetsurô hated practising guitar, and tended to play only catchy guitar riffs or famous melodies such as theme songs for animation or standard music.<sup>8</sup> He had strong likes and dislikes, and eventually refused to play Judy and Mary, the first common music of the band. Therefore, the other members had to allow Tetsurô's personal music – *L'arc~en~ciel* and *Hysteric Blue* – to become the band's common music. Luna Sea's music needs two guitarists, but Tetsurô hated playing alongside another. In visual rock, Tetsurô was fond of *Kuroyume* (meaning 'black dream' in English; *Kuroyume* was a popular visual rock band in 1998, consisting of two men), which Takuya and Wataru hated. Thus, the gap between Tetsurô's and Takuya/Wataru's musical orientation was not narrowed even though they all loved visual rock as their personal music.

When Tetsurô's mother suddenly passed away in January 2001, Takuya and Wataru continued their practices without either him or the female vocalist Keiko, who, like Tetsurô, had favoured female bands. So the band's split was caused not only by Tetsurô's family bereavement, but also by the discord between the band members' personal music and their common music. One day, when Tetsurô and Keiko played

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<sup>7</sup> Shazna started as a visual rock band before they contracted with a major record company. However, after it became popular through TV appearance, Izamu, a vocalist of Shazna, was regarded as an idol singer and the band itself was criticised for 'falling' into a mere pop band. I will discuss this shift in Chapter 7.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Schwartz (1993) for adolescent boys' enthusiasm for playing famous guitar phrases such as that at the beginning of Led Zeppelin's 'Stairway to Heaven' (Schwartz 1993: 281-282).

truant from the practice and went together to buy a new score of Hysteric Blue, Wataru and Takuya finally exploded, saying ‘no more *Hisu-buru*. We want to play Luna Sea’. Thus, the discord between Takuya and Wataru’s Luna Sea (male band) and Tetsurô and Keiko’s Hysteric Blue (female bands) mainly triggered the splitting up of the band.

Nobody in the Millennium Band liked Judy and Mary except Keiko, and perhaps she did not either, but as this was their ‘common music’, they could not escape from copying it. When Takuya talked with Ms. Watanabe about their practices, Takuya said ‘I like *Judi-mari* (Judy and Mary)’ in order to satisfy their extra-curricular teacher that they had a ‘common music’. This is the very reason why I categorise the folk song club as a semi-formal space. Their musical knowledge is basically free from legitimised school knowledge, but they are still assessed by teachers or other members of the club in the light of their musical practices as well as their choice of music.

Despite the fact that they said they liked Judy and Mary in front of the teacher, when Takuya returned to the practice room, Tetsurô said ‘I hate *Judi-mari*’ and the other two male members agreed. Meanwhile, Takuya and Wataru were desperately hoping to do copies of Luna Sea, and during the absence of Tetsurô and Keiko, they enjoyed jamming their songs. However, as they could neither sing in Ryûichi’s high range, nor find somebody who could, they were almost led to give this up, until Wataru said ‘I will stay in this band if we can find a male vocalist who can sing Ryûichi’s part and play the songs of Luna Sea’. Wataru eventually relaxed with Takuya as a fellow Luna Sea enthusiast. Thus, if members’ personal music approximates to the common music of the band, boys can enjoy their positions in the subcultural peer band group.

### *Pile Driver*

Next, I investigate another band in the folk song club in High School Y. Pile Driver was a punk oriented all-male band that mainly copied songs of the Japanese punk rock band, High Standard. Kôhei, the vocalist and guitarist of Pile Driver, was in the first year (Year 10), and found the folk song club comfortable:

[Interview 10; Kôhei (m); playground at High School Y]

*KK:* Do you find any merit in playing music in the folk song club?

*Kôhei:* Yes, I can play on the stage of the school festival.

Kôhei complained that he was not allowed to play in a band at his junior high school, and so organised a band by himself outside school.

[Interview 10]

*KK:* How about when you were in junior high school?

*Kôhei:* We were not allowed to play music in school.

*KK:* Did your teachers oppose the band?

*Kôhei:* Yes, they showed opposition to the band.

*KK:* So, did you hide playing from the school?

*Kôhei:* Well, the school [pause] probably, they didn't have a good impression of us.

*KK:* How about this high school?

*Kôhei:* Oh, I found it very comfortable to play in a band.

Whilst Kôhei liked playing in his high school band, he put higher priority on his 'local' band with his neighbours.

[Interview 10]

*KK:* Do you want to make a living from performing music?

*Kôhei:* If possible. I want to earn a living from music.

*KK:* With this band [Pile Driver]?

*Kôhei:* Nope, with the local band.

*KK:* What about the band in school?

*Kôhei:* Well [.]

*KK:* Do you still continue to play in the local band?

*Kôhei:* It's three or four years since I started it.

*KK:* Does that band also copy a punk band?

*Kôhei:* No, we're playing original songs.

*KK:* Do you compose them?

*Kôhei:* I do as well as the other members.

*KK:* What percentage does music occupy in your everyday life?

*Kôhei:* I put highest priority on the band activity.

*KK:* On the local band?

*Kôhei:* Definitely. Music occupies my life.

Emphasising playing ‘original songs’, Kôhei drew a line between the *school band* and the *local band*. For Kôhei, the former was merely ‘the band at school’, whereas the latter was a subcultural peer group. In Pile Driver, High Standard functioned as common music, but in his local, or informal setting, Kôhei liked to listen to the Sex Pistols or other British and US-American punk. Kôhei was therefore torn between his personal music (British/US-American punk) and Pile Driver’s common music (Japanese punk rock).

Another member, Hikaru, the drummer of Pile Driver, who was also a first year (Year 10) pupil, had broader musical tastes than Kôhei.

[Interview 11; Kôhei (m) and Hikaru (m); playground at High School Y]

*KK:* Have you started playing music since you were a junior high school pupil?

*Hikaru:* Yes, since junior high school age.

*KK:* What kinds of music did you like first?

*Hikaru:* Did I *like*?

*KK:* Yes.

*Hikaru:* Led Zeppelin [laugh]

*KK:* Oh, do you like UK rock?

*Kôhei:* He has a very broad taste on music. From jazz [.]

*Hikaru:* On jazz, I like Buddy Rich.

*KK:* How do you collect information on music?

*Hikaru:* dunno [.]

*Kôhei:* by word of mouth?

*Hikaru:* Nope, by magazines [.]

*KK:* Were there any influence from your friends?

*Hikaru:* Nope. I was the only drummer in my neighbourhood.

*KK:* So, why did you suddenly listen to Led Zeppelin?

*Hikaru:* I dunno even when you ask me [.]

*Kôhei:* [Laugh]

*KK:* You might listen to Johnny's.

*Hikaru:* Well [.] I didn't want to follow the trend.

*KK:* How did you start playing drums?

*Hikaru:* I joined the brass band club in my junior high school.

*KK:* Right.

*Hikaru:* I played percussion.

*KK:* But in the brass band club, you played classical music, didn't you?

*Hikaru:* Yeah.

*KK:* Did you find it interesting?

*Hikaru:* Nope, it wasn't interesting at all.

*KK:* You wanted to play drums somehow.

*Hikaru:* That's it.

*KK:* However, there was not a folk song club in junior high school, am I right?

*Hikaru:* Well [pause], or say [.] I have been playing piano since I was very little.

*KK:* I see. Do your parents like music?

*Hikaru:* No, they don't. I'm the only music enthusiast in my family.

Hikaru denied any influences of friends or family members and emphasised the originality of his musical tastes. Although his comments on music classes were much more severe than those of Kôhei, Hikaru seemed pleased to play in the folk song club. Moreover, as Hikaru revealed a broad-based personal music in the semi-formal setting, the conflict between his personal music (from jazz to authentic Western-European rock) and the common music of the band (Japanese punk rock) did not heat up compared to Kôhei.

However, both Kôhei and Hikaru showed some complex feelings about the folk song club.

[Interview 11]



*KK:* Didn't you think to want to join other clubs?  
*Kôhei:* These days, I want to join athletic clubs.  
*Hikaru:* Yeah, the folk song club [pause]  
*KK:* Why do you think so?  
*Kôhei:* I like this club.  
*Hikaru:* I like it.  
*KK:* The matter of image?  
*Kôhei:* I haven't had any motivation to play in the school band lately [*yaruki ga nakunatta*].  
*Hikaru:* Neither have I.  
*Kôhei:* We have to change songs.  
 .  
*KK:* Is there any feelings of complex about sports?  
*Hikaru:* I'm slow on my feet.  
*Kôhei:* Yeah [.]  
*KK:* So do you want to do sports well?  
*Hikaru:* My parents gave me advice to join athletic clubs.  
*Kôhei:* At first, my parents said so, too.

The folk song club did not meet parents' expectations of boys, and when they felt ambiguous about doing sports or expressing themselves in a band, they sometimes complained about the folk song club.

Through interviewing members of Pile Driver, I found that male pupils were prone to construct their musical identity not within school band but within a subcultural peer group outside school, making use of common music in the semi-formal learning space and keeping well away from their personal music. In general, the Japanese male teenager often denies the influence of others in order to claim independence.

### **6.1.3 Girls and Popular Music in the Folk Song Club**

There were much fewer girl performers in the folk song club at High School Y. I interviewed three female members, and as usual, found it very difficult to tease out

their personal music. I will discuss two first year (Year 10) members of an all-girl band 'Himawari' and then the girl vocalist of the Millennium Band.

### *Himawari*

'Himawari' means 'sunflower' in English. When I asked how they named the band, Machiko, the vocalist and guitarist told me 'cause we're girls'. On stage, the members of Himawari ornamented microphones and instruments with artificial sunflowers. This kitsch image reminds us of the recent trend of '*kawaii*' [cute] culture among Japanese girls, especially Hello Kitty products.<sup>9</sup> Machiko told me why she started playing in the band:

[Interview 12; Machiko (f); playground at High School Y]

*KK:* What was a trigger for you to start playing in a band?

*Machiko:* A trigger [...] a trigger [pause]

*KK:* When and from what did you start?

*Machiko:* Ah [...] my friends joined the folk song club, and the bassist came to join it.

*KK:* Do all members like the same musical genre?

*Machiko:* Yeah. We all like Ringo Shîna [a female singer-songwriter playing guitar by herself, whose first name is called after Ringo Starr] and Blue Hearts [a punk rock band in Japan] [...]<sup>10</sup>

*KK:* You played them on the stage, didn't you?

*Machiko:* Exactly.

*KK:* And [...] what did you hope to do in the folk song club?

*Machiko:* 'Cause I was hoping to play guitar. I was hoping to play in a band.

*KK:* Right. Did you play any instruments in junior high school?

*Machiko:* I did nothing, so I was thinking to do band when I entered high school.

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<sup>9</sup> Hello Kitty has been exported to European countries. In 2000, a popular apparel shop 'Top Shop', Oxford Street, London, gave over a corner to Hello Kitty products, and many English women and girls showed interest. Another representative of the kitsch culture of Japanese girls is the print club machine, with which one can make instant photo seals with friends. See also Kinsella (1995) for young women's 'cute' culture in Japan since the 1980s.

<sup>10</sup> Although the vocalist of Blue Hearts is male, as their melodies are very simple and easy to sing, their music has provided a popular karaoke repertoire for Japanese girls as well as for boys.

*KK:* Did joining the folk song club bring any advantages?

*Machiko:* We could get members easily!

For girls, the folk song club provides opportunities to play in a band. Boys can relatively easily collect band members through their male peer networks, but as Clawson (1999) showed, girls' access to bands is very restricted (see also p. 62 of this thesis). In addition, girls are sometimes not even allowed to attend gigs or go to clubs.<sup>11</sup>

[Interview 12]

*KK:* Do you go to clubs or attend gigs?

*Machiko:* No, I seldom do.

*KK:* Why?

*Machiko:* Ah, clubs? My parents are quite strict about those things.

*KK:* So [.]

*Machiko:* I want to go, but [.]

*KK:* So, do they allow you to play in school band?

*Machiko:* Yeah.

For Machiko, musical practice in the folk song club in school was an alternative to going to clubs or gigs.

Another member, Nami, shared Machiko's motivation for joining the club.

[Interview 13; Nami (f) and Machiko (f) ; playground at High School Y]

*KK:* Why did you join the folk song club?

*Nami:* I have been really fond of music.

*KK:* What kinds [.]

*Nami:* I have experience of playing instruments, so I immediately joined the folk song club.

*KK:* Did you play in a band in junior high school, too?

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<sup>11</sup> For restrictions on girls' activities in the UK, see McRobbie and Garber 1975; McRobbie 1978.

*Nami:* There wasn't a folk song club in junior high school.

*KK:* Why did you make up your mind to play in the folk song club? I suppose that you can play in a band outside school, with members of other high schools [.]

*Nami:* I found that it's much easier to play in the folk song club.

*KK:* Much easier, for whom? For teachers, or for your parents?

*Nami:* Yeah.

*KK:* For your friends?

*Nami:* Friends [.] Outside the extra-curricular activity, I find it very difficult to collect band members.

As these female performers found that girls tended to encounter difficulties in collecting members and continuing band activities outside the folk song club, they made full use of the advantages of joining school bands.

However, they were by no means content with the band's all-girl membership at that time.

[Interview 13]

*KK:* Do you usually play in an all-girl band?

*Nami:* Yes.

*Machiko:* We've been playing all the time in an all-girl band.

*KK:* Do you prefer playing in all-girl band?

*Nami:* No, I don't think so.

*Machiko:* By chance, we've got girl members.

*KK:* Was it because of the sameness of musical orientation?

*Machiko:* Dunno [.] it was very difficult to collect members and I scraped up girls somehow.

After this interview, Himawari broke up. Ms. Watanabe told me that Machiko and the other three members quarreled. This made me wonder whether the girls had been honest about their common music or not, as girls' tactics for concealing their personal

music in front of others are so complicated that even close friends cannot easily understand each other's personal music. Through the interviews with members of Himawari, I noticed that the connections between members of a band in the folk song club, as an example of the semi-formal learning space, differ from those in the subcultural peer band culture, that is, in an informal learning space. The conflict between personal music and common music becomes more complicated than with boys (see the discussion of the Millennium Band and Pile Driver above) due to girls' covert tactics of concealing their personal music in the semi-formal setting.

### *The Millennium Band*

Keiko was the only girl in the Millennium Band, and was a second year (Year 11) pupil like Takuya and Tetsurô. As she seldom appeared in the practice room, I could not observe how she practised in the extra-curricular hour. The most important point that I understood from the individual interview with her was that she had wanted to play guitar at first.

[Interview 14; Keiko (f) ; playground at High School Y]

KK: How long have you sung in the band?

Keiko: Under half a year [...] only four months.

KK: Do you like to go to karaoke in everyday life?

Keiko: Yes.

KK: So, if your friends invite you to go to karaoke, are you happy to join?

Keiko: It depends on my financial condition (laugh).

KK: What did you do in junior high school?

Keiko: I joined the athletic club.

KK: Have you moved from the athletic club to the folk song club?

Keiko: Yeah.

KK: Do you play instruments?

Keiko: No, I don't. Actually, I was hoping to play guitar at first. But when I asked a guitarist to teach me, he was very busy [...]

For Keiko, joining the folk song club was an alternative to learning the guitar, but

when she joined the Millennium Band as a 'fill-in' for the ex-vocalist, the rest of the members expected her only to sing, and consequently Keiko seemed to gradually lose her enthusiasm. It is likely that she had not told them about her ambition to play the guitar. Furthermore, as Tetsurô, her like-minded friend, began to miss practices, she felt uncomfortable in the band, and stopped attending. In the interview, she said that she listened to Judy and Mary and L'arc~en~ciel. However, I could not understand whether these popular bands were personal music or common music for her, as she did not disclose why she became interested in playing the guitar. The case of Keiko exhibits a striking contrast to those of Takuya and Wataru. Whereas Takuya and Wataru joined the band for the first time at high school, Keiko's early ambition to play the guitar was blocked.

In addition to the gap between the personal music and the common music of the band (see p. 144), gender was another important reason for their demise.<sup>12</sup> As Takuya and Wataru were so enthusiastic to practise their instruments and jam together, Keiko had no opportunity to sing during practice hours. She just sat down alone on a chair in the practice room writing email messages on her mobile phone,<sup>13</sup> whilst Takuya and Wataru felt guilty about her. At the same time they wanted a boy vocalist so they could copy Luna Sea, and have all-male jams without worrying about girls.

Problems with relation to gender in the Millennium Band took the following forms. Firstly, a girl vocalist in an otherwise male band tends to narrow the band's common music, which endangers its existence. Secondly, personal music can become common music in the folk song club setting, if like-minded members of either sex join the same band. And thirdly, when boys jam with instruments in the club, the girl member can easily be excluded from the masculine microcosm. For girl members, it is crucial to find a comfortable space in the folk song club. Whereas boy performers set their personal music against that of other members' personal music, and the common music of the band, girl performers took refuge in this common music. As a result, girls could easily lose their position in the band because of their relative unwillingness to insist on their personal music. Here again in the semi-formal learning space, we notice

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<sup>12</sup> See Bayton (1998) and Clawson (1999) for the difficulties experienced by females in mixed bands.

<sup>13</sup> Adolescents' enthusiasm for writing email messages on mobile phones everywhere is the most outstanding feature of the Japanese IT (information technology) age.

the contrast between boys' strategies of putting forward different musical sub-styles or artists, and girls' tactics of relying on common music in order to conceal their personal music in front of others.

## **6.2 Popular Music in the High School Pupils' Band Event**

### **6.2.1 *Boys and Popular Music in the High School Pupils' Band Event***

In this section, I examine the relationship between boy performers and popular music in another semi-formal learning space, that is, a high school pupils' band event, where most participants in 1998 were male. The high school pupils' band event that I attended is one of the most active popular music contests for high school pupils in Japan. In my fieldwork in August 1998, only two out of ten bands included female members. Consequently, the group interviews were with 33 boys and only 2 girls. Most of the performers were second year (Year 11) pupils, because, while the first year (Year 10) pupils had just started high school from April,<sup>14</sup> the third year (Year 12) pupils were busy preparing to go into tertiary education or get a job. Although the event was nationwide, I attended local preliminary contests in the Kansai area (see the footnote to p. 69) alone. While the musical knowledge involved is relatively free from school legitimization, the participants nonetheless assess one another. Hence, I categorise this event as a semi-formal learning space.

In contrast to the pupil's discourse in school, the band members' mutual understanding of the musical tastes of other members led to spontaneous discussions of their personal music, the range of which was wide, from TM Network (a synthesiser-based popular band of the 1980s, in which Tetsuya Komuro played keyboard) to Eric Clapton. Boy performers had familiarised themselves with 'talking shop' in everyday practices, and they often evaluated popular music through 'critical discourses' adopted from the music press.

Meanwhile, either X Japan (the leading visual rock band from the late 1980s through to the 1990s, CD-ROM, Track 10) or the Beatles were regarded as the 'common music' that led boys to join and continue band practices. These two charismatic bands correspond to two popular musical sub-styles among Japanese youth mentioned in Chapter 4. Whereas the former is representative of visual rock, the latter

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<sup>14</sup> The academic year in Japan starts in April and ends in March.

is representative of guitar bands. Boys clearly discriminated this common music from their personal music, to which they felt deeply committed at that particular moment.

The way that band members established their musical identity through their choice of performance repertoire made them much less respectful of adults' musical tastes than in the formal learning space. In general, a leader or leaders constructed the musical identity of the band on the basis of their personal music, which was therefore the primary determinant of their style. In almost all cases, when the leader, who was either a guitarist or bassist, introduced their personal music to the vocalist, drummer or keyboard player, it became the common music of the band, not least because the vocalist, drummer and keyboard player were often collected only after the guitarist or bassist had already set up the band. Western-European rock [*yôgaku*] oriented boys had been influenced by Japanese rock [*hôgaku*] oriented members, and vice versa in a process of exchange that was very important to their song-writing: and which had been experienced by all the successful high school bands.

In the high school pupils' band event, each band had twenty minutes on stage. They all played several pieces, generally divided evenly between copies and original songs. On the one hand, boy performers played copies from their common music for fun and performed original songs with sincerity. On the other hand, the high school pupils' band event had an event which selected pupils' songs that conveyed representative contemporary messages. The event demanded at least one original song with lyrics, which boy performers seemed to use to convey their essential messages to the audience. The band event was the semi-formal space in which non-legitimised knowledge went to-and-fro. However, no sooner than the *selection* occurred, did it tend to impose restrictions on the original songs, which is very similar to what happened in the school chorus contest in High School X (see pp. 104-105). Both the selection of the representative band and that of the appropriate songs at the local preliminary contest in the high school pupils' band event depended on the ideology of 'good high school boy'. Angela McRobbie (1978) suggested that 'adolescence itself is an ideological construct whose connotations are immediately identifiable' (McRobbie 1978: 99). Likewise, the term 'high school pupils' [*kôkôsei*] implies the ideology of 'schooling for society' in Japan. For example, in the high school baseball championship tournament mentioned in 5.4.1 (p. 117), qualities of 'cleanness' and 'freshness' are acclaimed by adult



audiences as desirable attributes for high school boys. It was this educational ideology of '*clean and fresh* high school boys' that was deeply embedded in the selection of the high school pupils' band event. Although high school boys might well express anti-school messages, such as 'hatred', 'resistance' or 'violence' outside school, they seemed self-restrained to control their messages by pretending to be 'ideal high school boys' in front of the judges, since they were well aware that their criteria for selection and evaluation had much in common with the schooling system. Indeed, one participating band sang 'I'm disgusted', not in Japanese, but in English to make the meaning elusive; nevertheless, it was still not selected as representative. This case showed that the selective phase of the band event could change non-legitimate to quasi-legitimate knowledge, even in the semi-formal space.

The planning committee for the event was dominated by female pupils, because they were either reluctant to, or had no chance to participate as performers. The girl planners looked forward to enjoying their position of listening to their male peers' performance. This division of labour between male performers and female consumers of popular music continues in the professional popular music world. Likewise, the messages of band members were conveyed from boys as active transmitters to girls as passive receivers. Boy vocalists appealed to girls, saying 'I will sing cleanly and freshly', and strategically wove youthful keywords of 'life', 'love' or 'dreams' into lyrics. Thus, even in the semi-formal space, boy performers voluntarily constructed themselves as 'high school boys' positioned between children and adults. It was clear that boys' strategies for employing popular music were drawn up to negotiate with and appeal especially to female listeners.

In order to investigate boys' discourses on popular music at the high school pupils' band event, I divide the ten participating bands into the following five categories.

- (1) Originals bands: Loose, *Kawa-jum* Folk
- (2) Classic-rock-oriented bands: Edge Ax, Sister
- (3) Expressive bands: HM Band, Crazy Sister, Dead Stock
- (4) Nerd bands: Cyber Dance, The Cloudy Sky Ricky
- (5) Party band: Groovy

Following these five categories, I will analyse the features of each band respectively.

(1) Originals bands: Loose, *Kawa-jum* Folk

An ‘originals band’ is one which is oriented towards creating its own songs. The originals band has already exceeded a mere copy band in its individuality.<sup>15</sup>

Loose was one of the most successful bands in the 1998 event. It consisted of four boy performers with a boy vocalist and a girl guitarist. Takashi had started playing bass under the influence of his elder brother who liked *yôgaku* [Western-European music].

[Interview 15; Takashi (m), Tomoaki (m), vocalist (m), drums (m) and Chika (f); the event]

KK: Whose influence made you play in bands?

Takashi: Influenced by my elder brother.

KK: What kind of music did your elder brother listen to?

Takashi: A piece? *Yôgaku* [Western-European music], very violent one.

KK: *Yôgaku*, violent what?

Takashi: Heavy metal.

KK: So, do you like Western heavy metal? Don’t you listen to *hōgaku* [Japanese popular music]?

Takashi: It depends on pieces. But I buy only *yôgaku* CD’s.

By contrast, Tomoaki, a guitarist in Loose, was influenced by Japanese rock artists.

[Interview 15]

KK: Do you have any artists who had influenced you?

Tomoaki: The Alfee [a very popular pop/rock band in 1980s Japan].

Takashi: Oh, you’ve come out!

KK: When did you like them? When did you find the Alfee fine?

Tomoaki: When I was third year [Year 9] in junior high school.

KK: Ah [...] but I suppose that the Alfee was a has-been band and they

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<sup>15</sup> Green (2001) defined originals bands’ music as that which ‘denotes compositions that are felt to

haven't appeared in the major music scene anymore.

*Tomoaki:* I'm prepared for that.

*Chika [a girl guitarist]:* I expected you to say that!

*KK:* Certainly, they were very popular at one time, but [...] How did you know their music?

*Tomoaki:* I suppose I watched them on TV.

*Takashi:* Did they appear on TV?

*Tomoaki:* And I started playing guitar.

*Chika:* Perhaps, *Music Station* [a popular TV music programme, the target age range of which is relatively broad].

*Tomoaki:* Or *Pop Jam* [broadcast on NHK, which equates to the BBC in Britain. *Pop Jam* is an equivalent for *Top of the Pops* on BBC in all respects].

*KK:* I see. Are you still fond of the Alfee or that kind of genre?

*Tomoaki:* Since I entered high school, I have started to listen to *yôgaku*.

*KK:* *Yôgaku* [...] Was there somebody who influenced you?

*Tomoaki:* [pointing at Takashi]

*KK:* Did he influence your musical taste? Right. And what kind of genres do your original songs belong to?

*Chika:* Various genres.

*Takashi:* Very inconsistent.

I had expected adolescent boy performers to be influenced by either the in-bands or the classic rock musicians of the 1960s or 1970s, so I was a little surprised to hear that such a young boy guitarist liked a Japanese band of the 1980s. The musical orientation of Tomoaki had broadened from *hōgaku* to *yôgaku* under the influence of Takashi, who, although a little contemptuous of Tomoaki's old-fashioned musical taste, appeared to respect Tomoaki's musical orientation by writing original *hōgaku* songs for the band. In order to overcome the conflict between their personal music, at the beginning stage, these two boys had appropriated a Japanese hard rock band for their common music. The band had begun by copying B'z (a popular Japanese rock band which can be

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be idiosyncratic to the band (Green 2001: 53).

categorised as a guitar band, CD-ROM, Track 9), who had then become their common music, even to the extent that the band's name, 'Loose', was taken from the title of a B'z album. The most important feature of Loose was the discrepancy between the personal musical orientations of its two central members, that is between *yôgaku* and *hōgaku*, which gave the band a much broader musical expression, allowing Takashi and Tomoaki to write original songs in both styles.<sup>16</sup>

Another original band, *Kawa-jum* [leather jacket] Folk, was a parody of mainstream rock. 'If we just directly call ourselves "Rock and *Kawa-jum*", it's not cool', the vocalist Jô said. They named their band 'Folk' [*fōku*]<sup>17</sup> because of its lack of a drum part. In fact, this band had a musical orientation towards a new type of guitar band music in order to clearly differentiate itself from what was then mainstream pop/rock. In this band, Jô and a bassist Kunihiro aimed to create *hōgaku* which was simpler than visual rock, the most popular genre in 1998. The only *yôgaku* oriented member was the guitarist Fumio, a follower of Oasis. Considering the personal music of each member, *hōgaku* was predominant in this band (see p. 84 for the relative unpopularity of *yôgaku* in contemporary Japan). As both Jô and Kunihiro had established the band, and Fumio joined later, the musical identity of the band was constructed by the former two. In addition, while Jô and Kunihiro were third year (Year 12) pupils, Fumio was in his first year (Year 10). Given these conditions, the influence of Fumio seemed very weak, but Jô and Kunihiro had by no means ignored *yôgaku*. These two boys commented on their *hōgaku* orientation as follows:

[Interview 16; Jô (m), Kunihiro (m) and Fumio (m); the event]

Jô: The other day, as we two [Jô and Kunihiro] kept playing over chords, we felt something lacking. So we tried playing Eric Clapton.

KK: Well [.]

Jô: That sort of music [.] Fumio recommended us.

KK: So, Fumio has brought a new flavour of *yôgaku* into this Japanese band, hasn't he?

Kunihiro: At the beginning, I listened to *yôgaku* [.] but I got fed up with it. So I

<sup>16</sup> However, I have to add that Takashi left the band after graduation from high school, as he went to a vocational school of music in Tokyo.

<sup>17</sup> See p. 81 on the usage of the term in this thesis.

shifted to listen to X Japan [.]

KK: Oh, really?

Kunihiro: When I was young, I listened to various kinds of music very broadly.

KK: I think you're still young [.]

Jô: There is a reason. *Hôgaku* is much more accessible to listeners than *yôgaku*.

Kunihiro: Because the words can be transmitted very straight.

KK: So, you listened to *yôgaku* and shifted to *hôgaku*, and then invited *yôgaku* oriented Fumio to change something in the band [.] am I right?

Fumio: I have been influenced by *hôgaku* and vice versa.

KK: Have you?

Jô: But we can't return to the way we were.

Kunihiro: We have to exceed it.

So, after due consideration, they decided to write folk song style pieces that could be heard as common music in contemporary Japan. In fact, their original songs had a 1970s flavour which was distinct from those of other bands, and they were successful in the local preliminary contest. During the interview, they emphasised that they were would-be musicians and wanted to 'make it' through a major record company as soon as possible. When I heard that the band had only ten original songs, I asked them why they did not continue playing gigs and develop their ability before making a professional debut. As two of the members were in the third year of high school, they seemed impatient to opt for the professional music business world. This kind of easy ambition was probably caused by the amateurism of many visual popular bands within the indie music scene in 1998 in Japan. Nevertheless, at any time and anywhere, boys want to 'make it' by playing in a band, and this insatiable ambition is the very reason for continuing band activities (see also Cohen 1991; Green 2001). For boys, joining a band and composing original songs is a popular means to a desired end.

Although these two 'originals' bands appeared to have very different musical orientations, they shared two significant characteristics. Firstly, both Loose and *Kawajum Folk* regarded participation in the band event as a test of their musical abilities. Whereas Loose accumulated considerable experience of gigs at local venues, the latter

sent demo tapes to the major record companies and did auditions, as well as playing as street musicians in Kyoto. For these two bands, participation in the event was a good way to introduce their musical potential. Secondly, although Loose oriented itself towards rock and *Kawa-jum* Folk towards folk, they had both attempted to learn something from the common music of older generations; the Alfee and folk song being popular among people in their thirties and forties. For these younger musicians, the common music of older generations was the best means to absorb the essence of long-lasting musical popularity.

(2) Classic-rock-oriented bands: Edge Ax, Sister

In my fieldwork, there were two ‘classic-rock-oriented bands’ whose dominant influences were British and US-American groups of the 1960s and 70s, such as the Beatles, Kiss, Deep Purple and Led Zeppelin. This music, which had already been established as ‘classic rock’ by their parents’ generation, provided these two bands with their common music.

As discussed in Chapter 3, Bourdieu indicated two modes of acquisition of cultural capital. Whereas ‘acquired capital’ is gained through methodical learning, ‘inherited capital’ is spontaneously given through cultural interaction at home (Bourdieu 1984: 63-83). Young Japanese bands tend to know about rock not as inherited capital from their fathers or elder brothers, but through exchanging acquired capital with their peers.

Shunji, a guitarist of Edge Ax explained how he first heard about rock music as follows.

[Interview 17; Shunji (m) and 4 other boy performers; the event]

*KK:* How did you start playing guitar?

*Shunji:* At first, I did music, piano [.]

*KK:* Did you play piano?

*Shunji:* When I was in the second year [Year 8] in junior high school, one of my friends invited me to play, and then I opened my eyes to guitar. The initial band to which I listened was X Japan. One day, I heard the members of X saying ‘we’ve started a band by listening to Kiss’, so I

became interested in listening to Kiss [.]

KK: So are you fond of Kiss at the moment?

Shunji: I like rock on the whole.

1998 was the peak year in which X Japan opened the ears of Japanese youth to Anglophile rock, and mediated that music for those who followed their style, even after they broke up in 1997. Boy performers, influenced by X Japan, exchanged this 'acquired capital' with their peers. In this way X Japan functioned as the 'father' of teenage boy performers, initiating them into an explicitly conservative conception of 'classic rock'. If, on the other hand, Japanese boy performers engage with '*yôgaku-banare*', which means a turning away from Western-European rock, they first follow indigenous tendencies, and then move into *yôgaku* under the influence of Japanese rock bands. Japanese young boy performers have fewer and fewer opportunities to encounter British/US-American rock directly. For boys, their peer subculture matters above all else, and, within contemporary Japanese male subcultures, Japanese rock takes the important role as common music to inform them of broader rock contexts.

In Sister, another classic-rock-oriented band, three of its members started playing in bands under the influence of the Beatles. Through copying Beatles' songs as common music, three members gradually took up other artists as their personal music, but all these 'other artists' differed from each other at that time. The keyboardist and drummer joined the band only after the initial three members had already constructed its musical identity, and could not easily identify themselves with the Beatles, having both been converted from classical music to rock. Not only did these two performers seem uninterested in the common music of the band, but they also showed no interest in any personal music in the semi-formal learning space. So, in Sister, classic rock functioned as the 'compulsory' common music, and divided its members into two groups: the *dominant* and the *dominated*.

### (3) Expressive bands: HM Band, Crazy Sister, Dead Stock

The 'expressive bands' [*hyôgen bando*] were also influenced by Japanese rock bands such as X Japan and Luna Sea (another leading visual rock band in 1990s Japan, CD-ROM, Track 11). The important difference between the classic-rock-oriented band and

the expressive band is that whereas the former accumulates knowledge of classic rock through band activities, the latter expresses itself with relatively little dependence on knowledge or tradition. In other words, while the former follows the tradition of classic rock, the latter aims at more original expression. X Japan, the icon of the expressive band, established the basis of visual rock in Japan, and Luna Sea was its successor. The year 1998 was the summit of visual rock in Japan; the year when Hide, the guitarist of X Japan, committed suicide, and thereby accelerated the boom of visual rock. It is therefore unsurprising that the influence of these two bands shows everywhere in my fieldwork of 1998.

Hisao, a vocalist and guitarist of HM Band,<sup>18</sup> started playing guitar under the influence of Luna Sea. Meanwhile, Osamu, another guitarist, was impressed with X Japan. Although these two had aimed to continue with the band, it broke up because of the idleness of the other members.

[Interview 18; Hisao (m) and Osamu (m); the event]

*KK:* What was a trigger for you to start playing in bands?

*Hisao:* A trigger, oh say, a school festival last year [.]

*Osamu:* We had five members. But two weeks before the school festival, we broke up.

*Hisao:* We two were left.

*Osamu:* And thought which genres we would play.

*Hisao:* Then, we composed one song and played in the school festival. That's the start.

*KK:* How was the reputation?

*Osamu:* My friends said it was nice.

*KK:* Well [.] have you listened to music since your were a junior high school pupil?

*Osamu:* Yeah. But I didn't compose.

*KK:* To compose [.] did you write lyrics?

*Osamu:* Nope. But whenever I listened to other musicians' songs, I was always thinking, 'if I were them, I would have done it that way'.

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<sup>18</sup> As the original name of this band derived from members' real names, I exceptionally changed its



*KK:* What artists do you like?  
*Osamu:* X Japan.  
*KK:* Which members do you like?  
*Osamu:* Yoshiki.  
*KK:* How do you like him?  
*Osamu:* Ah [.] I listened to his music admiringly 'cause he's created so many songs.  
*KK:* How about you?  
*Hisao:* Me? Luna Sea.  
*KK:* Did you wish to copy Luna Sea?  
*Hisao:* At first.  
*KK:* Did you play copies of Luna Sea?  
*Hisao:* Yes, at first.  
*KK:* But I suppose that your singing style is different from Ryûichi.  
*Hisao:* 'Cause, I am not a vocalist at all.  
*KK:* Really?  
*Osamu:* We're twin guitarists.  
*KK:* I see.  
*Osamu:* As we broke up, he has to sing.  
*KK:* Right. Which Luna Sea do you like? Before or after doing solo activities?  
*Hisao:* I liked it when they were an indie band.  
*KK:* How do you like it?  
*Hisao:* 'Cause, they were very visual.  
*KK:* Are you impressed with their stage acts?  
*Hisao:* Yeah.

As the two members of HM Band were both guitarists, and complained 'there are no like-minded friends who have the same aspirations in and out of school', they had tried to create a new type of rock based on twin guitar parts. For these two boys, doing something themselves somehow was much more significant than collecting knowledge

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name.

of British/US-American classic rock.

The next case of a male expressive band member was Hayato, the vocalist of Crazy Sister. He talked to me about how he started to sing:

[Interview 19; Hayato (m); the event]

When I was a junior high school pupil, my teacher named me and I sang a solo part in a choral contest. It was a fabulous experience and I could never forget that. So, that's why I really wanted to sing. Fortunately, one of my friends told Toshiya [the keyboardist of Crazy Sister] that I had a good voice, when Toshiya was looking for a vocalist. Then, he invited me to join his band, and I could start singing pop/rock songs.

Green emphasised the relation between femininity and singing in her book on music and gender (Green 1997). For her, throughout the history of both classical and popular music, 'singing' is evaluated as feminine activity by referring to either the Madonna or the whore image of idealised womanhood. Then, through a questionnaire survey and interviews, she discussed how, in school music education in England, both music teachers and pupils regarded girls as successful singers in the classroom.

[S]ixty-four out of the seventy-eight teachers indicated that girls are more successful at singing than boys. Many of these volunteered the further information that more girls take part in choir or other extra-curricular group-singing activities, often to the total exclusion of boys. Thirty-one teachers commented that boys are shy, reticent or awkward about singing in ways that are connected to puberty or to difficulties caused by the voice breaking. (Green 1997: 152)

The exception to this tendency is boys' willingness to sing rock. Green pointed out that '[a]lthough boys are not understood to like singing in choirs, and in many cases in class lessons too, six teachers noted that they are willing to sing in popular or rock bands' (*ibid.*: 178).

In Japan, girls' ascendancy over boys in singing activities in the classroom and extra-curricular school activities is also remarkable. However, through my

ethnographic study, I found that many boys did want to sing desperately in the semi-formal learning space. From Hayato's discourse above, it would seem that teachers could encourage potential male singers, although the decisive trigger for him was not school activity, but Ryûichi Kawamura, the vocalist of Luna Sea.

Although starting as rock bands, a lot of visual bands shifted to accessible 'pop' since visual-*kei* became popular on TV music programmes in 1998. As in the late 1930s, when '[t]he success of (Bing) Crosby and (Louis) Armstrong in appealing to a wider audience propelled popular attention towards singers rather than players' (Potter 1998: 105), the singer of visual bands became a 'superstar' with a backing band. However, the singer's exclusive popularity in Japanese visual bands is caused mainly by the underestimation of instrumentalists by ordinary listeners. In a sense, Luna Sea declined due to Ryûichi's shift of vocal style, despite the fact that when they broke up in December 2000, they were still considered to be a great rock band, and continued to influence boy performers.

In 1991, Luna Sea released their first album on Yoshiki's (the leading member of X Japan) indie label 'Extasy Records', and a year later contracted with a major record company. As the band's name 'Luna Sea' is a play on the English word 'lunacy', the initial theme of visual rock was focussed on the dark side of humanity, and in this sense could be compared to 'Gothic rock',<sup>19</sup> which was popular in 1980s Britain. Luna Sea's lyrics were at first morbid and mysterious, and they wore black clothes and heavy make-up, all of which were unique in Japan. However, after contracting with a major record company, they removed their make-up and changed to ordinary clothes, and as their appearance changed, so too did their message become more accessible. Luna Sea folded for one year in 1997, during which time Ryûichi made his debut as a solo singer, 'Ryûichi Kawamura'. During this period, he used a different style of 'ecstatic singing', which he retained after the reformation of Luna Sea. Falsetto as an alternative to shout in rock has been the most remarkable feature of his vocal display since 1997, as can be heard on the album *Shine* (1998) which is full of his new sweet, teenybop flavoured voice.

After singing Luna Sea's 'Rosier' on stage, Hayato mentioned that he followed

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<sup>19</sup> Gothic rock followed after the punk movement and was popular in 1980s Britain. Bauhaus, Love and Rockets, Sisters of Mercy and Mission (UK) were its representatives. While Gothic rock uses low vocal and instrumental sounds at slow tempi, Japanese visual rock is sung in a very high voice.

Ryūichi ‘‘cause he sings very pleasingly. I really like his songs and singing styles, as he expresses how he feels through songs’. In recent Japan, boys have wanted to sing in bands more than ever before, since karaoke became so popular amongst both teenage girls and boys. Ryūichi is their icon because his ecstatic singing style liberated many boys from their traditional inferiority complex about girls’ excellence in school music education (see Koizumi 2001b). The expressive bands in my ethnographic study had all been influenced by pioneer visual rock musicians, who created not only a new musical expression but also a new musical identity for Japanese boys. The instrumentalists of Luna Sea were also icons for boy performers. Their influence was significant both for a boy vocalist (Hayato in Crazy Sister) and a guitarist (Hisao in HM Band, also see Wataru and Takuya of the Millennium Band in 6.1.2). For them, Luna Sea functioned as common music for the band, from which they struggled to express a new musical world by themselves. When each member’s personal music (visual rock) equates with the common music of the band (Luna Sea / X Japan), the band can expect future developments.

Boys are often deprived of many musical experiences at school, because the athletic club is regarded as being more suitable for them. Boys feel shameful and self-consciousness about school choir, and their voice changing worsens the image of music classes further (*Kyōiku Ongaku Shōgaku-ban* 1996). A male pupil said, ‘I keep it secret that I learn piano, because learning piano is thought to be feminine’ (Kameda and Tachi 2000: 16). Boys have to conquer peer-group pressure to join musical activities or music clubs in school. A questionnaire study by Kimura (1999) shows that only 12.9 per cent of boys in elementary schools in Osaka regard music as their favourite subject, while 43.4 per cent of girls do so (Kimura 1999: 111; see also Green 1997: 168-175). The vocalist of Sister regretted that he could not join a choral club in junior high school, and had responded by joining a band at high school. The high school pupils’ band event gave opportunities for these alienated boys to play music in public.

Experience with classical music practice also helped boys in the expressive band. While the drummer and guitarist of Dead Stock both played the electric organ when they were elementary school boys, Shunji, the guitarist of Edge Ax, played the piano. For these boys, playing in a band was a good second chance to express themselves in

music. As boys who play classical music are often called ‘sissy’ by their peers (*ibid.*), they usually stop playing after graduation from elementary school, but then popular music enables them to show off their masculinity in terms of hugely amplified sound, and to invest their inherited capital of classical music into rock.

(4) Nerd bands: Cyber Dance, The Cloudy Sky Ricky

There were two bands which I categorised as ‘nerd bands’ [*otaku bando*]. All members of Cyber Dance went to an elite private school.<sup>20</sup> Most had played piano in their infancy, and they demonstrated their ‘nerd’ knowledge of popular music. Their attitude was close to that of *otaku*, a nerd listener with exclusive interest in their own preferences (see p. 82). Whereas the bulk of boy performers’ personal music in 1998 was visual rock, Japanese guitar bands, and British/US-American rock, the personal music of members of Cyber Dance was jazz funk from Earth Wind and Fire and James Brown through to Brothers Johnson and Weather Report. These elite boys showed off their enthusiasm for jazz fusion and black music at a time when such styles were only appreciated by upper college students. Furthermore, this band also copied pieces from YMO (Yellow Magic Orchestra, the leading representative of techno-pop in the world, in which Ryûichi Sakamoto plays keyboard) and trite popular songs of the 1980s. By choosing such unpopular influences, their audiences could easily understand that they were critical of Japanese mainstream pop/rock. Their inter-textual discourse on popular music was close to music journalism, and the band event was a space for connecting their inherited capital of classical gestures with common music as acquired capital.

Another nerd band, the Cloudy Sky Ricky centred on the drummer, Tsutomu, who lived in Malaysia because of his father’s job. The so-called ‘returnee Japanese children’ [*kikokusei*] are regarded as an elite, since their families are usually affluent and proficient in English and other languages. Throughout the interview, Tsutomu showed a critical attitude towards mainstream popular music.

[Interview 20; Tsutomu (m), Daijirô (m) and boy bassist; the event]

KK:           Who is your favourite artist?

Tsutomu:    I listen to Bonnie Pink [Black music oriented Japanese female singer-

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<sup>20</sup> The ‘private school’ in Japan equates to the ‘public school’ in Britain.

songwriter who lives in New York]

KK: Is it because your lyrics are very critical of Japanese society?

Tsutomu: Nope, I've never thought to follow her.

KK: Oh, haven't you?

Tsutomu: Definitely, no.

KK: So, you hate to follow the same way which others do.

Tsutomu: I am not thinking in that way. Merely, I discriminate *music of listening* from *music of playing*. Basically, I like Bonnie Pink. But I don't intend to make her music mine.

KK: It seems to me that all you three [members of the band] are always doing jam session even when chatting with each other.

Daijirô [a guitarist]: Yeah.

Tsutomu: Like a rage.

Daijirô: We're all thinking to fire each other!

KK: To fire each other?

Tsutomu: Yeah, very competitive.

KK: Well, very competitive [.]

Tsutomu: If we stop competing, it's the end of the story.

KK: How do you find visual rock/pop?

Daijirô: The worst in the world!

KK: What point do you think it's the worst?

Daijirô: I hate it because they sell their good looks.

Tsutomu: I hate much more the audience who accepts it.

Tsutomu seemed aware of my intention to tease out his personal music. The other two members of this band followed Tsutomu's style of talking about music. I felt they were dodging my questions by using distracting strategies to conceal their personal music, such as discriminating *music for listening* from *music for playing*, criticising each member's musical orientation or performance skills, and brutally attacking visual pop/rock, mainstream popular music in Japan at that time.

One of Tsutomu's friends, Shirô, who attended the band event as a listener, commented with great perspicacity on recent high school pupils as follows: 'through my experience of a speech contest,<sup>21</sup> there seem so many high school pupils who think "I can't understand who I am. Although I want to express myself in public, as I don't know which persona is really mine, I can't do that"'. Shirô's comment gave me a clue to why not only girls, but also boys dodged my questions about personal music. Personal music closely connects to boys' identity and they are cautious not to disclose it even in the semi-formal space, for fear of being assessed by others at any time or place.

#### (5) Party band: Groovy

The last category amongst the bands which I interviewed was the 'party band', the name of which I derived from Ian Condry's term 'party rap', which he distinguished from another form of Japanese rap. He explained that 'party rap tends to be lighthearted and upbeat, and one argument is that this style is more appropriate to the happy-go-lucky life of Japanese youth' (Condry 1999: 99). Groovy consisted of the captain of the basketball club, a professional actor, and a working pupil [baitâ], who were all studying in the same high school. The band thought of their activities as exciting a 'party' atmosphere.

[Interview 21; Isao (m), Yutaka (m), Seiichi (m) and boy vocalist; the event]

KK: Why did the captain of the basketball club start playing in band?

Isao [*a drummer*]: Maybe, I wanted to attract attention.

KK: Don't you attract attention by playing basketball?

Isao: Yes, I do. I have been selected as a member of the interscholastic athletic match.

Yutaka [*a guitarist*]: Are you really sure?

Isao: That's true. When I was an elementary school boy, I played football and was also selected as a member of a picked team of Osaka.

KK: I am curious why such a great athlete comes here to play drums.

Isao: 'Cause, I want to seek after love. Through doing sports, I seek after

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<sup>21</sup> Shirô was a member of a planning committee for a speech contest for high school pupils. He was not counted as a boy performer or listener in my fieldwork.

sweat and through playing music, I seek after love.

*Yutaka:* What a corny joke!

The members of Groovy concentrated on cheering up the audience rather than on playing better. Whereas their common music was High Standard (a punk rock band), personal music differed among its members, from Chage & Aska, Tamio Okuda through to X Japan. It is interesting that the follower of X Japan at first concealed his personal music, because the common music of this band was Japanese punk rock.

[Interview 21]

*KK:* What made you start playing bass?

*Seiichi:* At the beginning, I played guitar. But I shifted to bass.

*KK:* Were there any artists who influenced you?

*Seiichi:* I don't know [.]

*Yutaka:* You like X Japan, don't you?

*Seiichi:* Oh, yeah [.]

*Yutaka:* You said you like X Japan.

*Isao:* I've heard that, too.

*KK:* And are there any other artists you listen to?

*Seiichi:* Any artists [.]

*Yutaka:* You said you like Pata [a member of X Japan].

*Seiichi:* [silent]

It is possible that Seiichi was reluctant to disclose his personal music, X Japan, in the semi-formal space, as high spirits were vital for this party band. It was in contrast to members of the classic-rock-oriented bands and expressive bands, that this visual rock follower seemed unwilling to admit his love for X Japan.

None of the members of this party band considered continuing playing after graduation from high school. Isao wanted to be an English teacher, Yutaka hoped to be a beautician, and the vocalist wanted to continue being a professional actor on television. Thus, the party band were a motley crew, which only amused their listeners. All but Seiichi showed no concern about distinguishing their personal music from their common music in the semi-formal space.



### 6.2.2 *Girls and Popular Music in the High School Pupils' Band Event*

As mentioned earlier, in my fieldwork on the high school pupils' band event, only two out of the ten bands included female members. Loose included a female guitarist, Chika, who supported Tomoaki, the male lead guitarist, and Sister had a female drummer whose musical experience came from the school brass band club. In both bands, the male lead guitarist or bassist had constructed their musical identity, and the female performers took secondary roles.

Chika, the female 'helper' guitarist of Loose, went to a girls' high school where she played in an all-female band in a folk song club. Because the preliminary contest of the high school pupils' band event in Osaka Prefecture was so competitive, Loose, whose members went to high school there, temporarily hired Chika, who went to high school in Kyoto Prefecture, in order to enter their local preliminary contest. In short, Chika was a pawn in the less competitive local preliminary contest. She explained her band activities as follows:

[Interview 22; Chika (f); the event]

*KK:* How did you start playing guitar?

*Chika:* One of my friends in my girls' high school invited me to play in a school band. And, Tomoaki and I have known each other since childhood. One day, he asked me to join this band and he taught me how to play guitar.

*KK:* Is there a folk song club in your school?

*Chika:* Yes, I joined the club in school to play in a band.

*KK:* So, do you play in a school band, too?

*Chika:* I mainly play in a band in my school, and sometimes help to play in other bands.

*KK:* Which do you prefer, to play in a school band or to help to play in other bands?

*Chika:* Today is the last day for me to help to play in other bands.

*KK:* That means, you quit playing guitar?

*Chika:* I can also play keyboard in bands. I was hoping to finish playing guitar.

Through band activities in and out of school, Chika found that she could express herself more on keyboard than on guitar, and she felt hesitant about playing guitar alongside the boy guitarist in Loose. Even to be courteous, I could not say she was good. So, she dropped the guitar, with which many boys do well, and oriented herself towards keyboard. The only band she mentioned was GLAY (CD-ROM, Track 13), who were common music in the school folk song club at that time.

Minori was the drummer of Sister, the musical identity of which was constructed by the three boy members. Minori was recruited to play drums because she had played percussion in the brass band club at school. She did not talk about her personal music, in which the other members showed no interest, partly because they had established its identity, and so she had no chance to insist on what she hoped to play in the band. Moreover, Minori was regarded as a classically-oriented performer due to her experience in the brass band club, which excused her from disclosing her personal music.

### 6.3 Summary

In this chapter I have discussed two semi-formal learning spaces, the school folk song club and the high school pupils' band event outside school. In the folk song club, whereas boy performers struggled with other members to promote their personal music as the band's common music, girl performers sought shelter under the common music. Here again in the semi-formal learning space, there is a marked contrast between boys' *strategies* of putting forward differentiated musical sub-styles or artists, and girls' *tactics* of relying on common music in order to conceal their personal music in front of others.

In the high school pupils' band event, because boy performers belonged to their band's subcultural peer group, their discourse about popular music always seemed spontaneous, but they showed varying amounts of conflict between openness and secrecy according to the category of their band. The original bands overcame discrepancies between the personal music of each member by writing and performing original songs as their common music. The classic-rock-oriented bands accumulated knowledge of British/US-American rock through Japanese bands. In the expressive bands, like-minded members regarded visual rock as the common music through which

they struggled to express their own musical world. The nerd bands used distracting strategies to conceal their personal music. The party band clearly discriminated between their personal music and the common music of the band. Meanwhile, the two girl performers looked askance at the boy performers' strategies for emphasising their personal music, and acted as mere 'helpers' of the band. For girls, there was neither opportunity nor necessity to disclose their personal music in the band setting.

## Chapter 7

# Popular Music, Musical Practice and Gender in the Informal Learning Space

### 7.1 Popular Music Listeners in Leisure Sites

#### 7.1.1 *Boys as Rock Listeners*

Whilst it was easy to find boys *performers* in leisure sites, I found it very difficult to meet male high school pupils who only listened to popular music. The reasons for this are firstly, financial restrictions; secondly, the performance orientation of teenage boys who are interested in popular music; and thirdly, their lack of sufficient knowledge on the history of popular music to be able to collect records.

Firstly, high school pupils cannot afford to collect CDs or records either for their intrinsic interest or for the sake of collecting. In this study, I regard a record collector as a special type of the devoted popular music listener, but high school pupils on average are usually given a monthly allowance of 10 thousand yen (approximately 50 pounds) besides income from part-time jobs. Even if they spend all their allowance on buying CDs, they can only afford to buy 48 in a year, at which rate it would take at least ten years to collect sufficient for an acceptable size collection – approximately over 500 records. In addition, as a CD rental business has been established in Japan since the mid-1980s, both teenage boys and girls are far more prone to borrow CDs rather than buy them compared to youngsters in the 1970s and 1980s. Furthermore, the development of information technology has made it possible to easily and economically obtain the latest popular music from the Internet. The form of ‘possession’ of popular music seems to have drastically changed over three decades in Japan.

Secondly, boy popular music enthusiasts usually at least attempt to get involved in performance, as they are often able to learn instruments in peer groups (see Green 2001). Consequently, far fewer high school boy pupils only listen to popular music compared with girls who do not have access to peer group bands, as I show later in this chapter.

Thirdly, their lack of sufficient historical knowledge of popular music in order to

collect records may impede high school boys from devoting themselves to listening to popular music. Recently in Japan, with the exception of boy members of the classic-rock-oriented bands discussed in Chapter 6, boy performers appear not to have accumulated knowledge of classic rock or jazz. For example, one of the studies of contemporary high school pupils and music in Japan shows that they commit to music mainly for the purpose of amusement (75%) and enhancing moods (65%). Only 13 per cent of them replied that they listen to music for cultivation ('Gendai no wakamono to ongaku' Kenkyûkai 1995). In the case of my fieldwork, I found that pupils gathered information on music mainly from TV programmes which introduce general mainstream popular music. The special magazine for record collectors in Japan named *Record Collectors* was not read by them. Pupils in my fieldwork read magazines not for the purpose of collecting knowledge about popular music, but for improving their performance skills (music magazines for amateur rock musicians such as *Burrn!* or *Band Yarouze* [*Let's Play Bands*] are popular among boy performers). These apathetic attitudes of contemporary pupils towards music as 'culture' or music as 'knowledge' may promote a decrease in the numbers of intensive pupil listeners that once existed in the 1960s and 1970s in Japan (see Otaka 1999 for record collectors aged over 40 in Japan). One of the workers at HMV Japan explained that high school pupils seem to buy CDs which their peers or the extra-curricular teacher of the school brass band club recommended.<sup>1</sup> High school boys are still in the process of accumulating knowledge of classic rock and jazz as inherited knowledge from the older generation.

For high school boys, uncovering their personal music in public is a matter of self-positioning, and it is more complicated for them to differentiate themselves from other boys by *what they listen to* than by *what they perform*. As the common music of a band is conspicuous through its repertoire, members can easily distinguish it from their personal music. Meanwhile, boy listeners have to struggle to find a common music whenever they talk about popular music with others. Whereas common music tightens the bond between band members, it is a matter of quick-witted strategy for boy listeners within their peer group.

As discussed in Chapter 6, for elite boy performers, the nerd band was a space for combining their inherited capital of classical music with the common music of the

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<sup>1</sup> Interviewed on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2000.

band as acquired capital. If boy listeners can find like-minded peers, they tend to organise a band to celebrate their common music through its performance. Hence, the boy listener who has insufficient knowledge to differentiate himself from others, or who cannot find like-minded peers with which to organise a band, becomes inconspicuous in leisure sites.

In November 2000, I interviewed a boy whose father collected rock records and whose mother had managed a 'rock bar' in Kobe since 1995. This boy had been given 'rock as inherited capital' by his parents, who belonged to the Beatles generation in Japan. Although it is not possible to generalise data from only one case, it is particularly interesting how this boy listener in the informal learning space compares with boy performers both inside and outside school as well as boy listeners in school.

Mitsuo, a first year (Year 10) high school pupil, noticed his unusual experience when he was in the fifth year (Year 5) of elementary school.

[Interview 23; Mitsuo (m); his mother's rock bar]

*KK:* How did you feel about the record collection in your home when you were very little?

*Mitsuo:* I saw it like an ordinary wall [laugh], as records naturally lined my home.

*KK:* Did you sometimes try to put them on a turntable and play behind your parents' backs?

*Mitsuo:* No, I never did, 'cause they treated them very carefully.

*KK:* Well. Did your parents recommend you what records to listen to?

*Mitsuo:* No. I've listened to the music which was played in my home.

*KK:* So, was music always played during breakfast time or supper time?

*Mitsuo:* Yeah.

*KK:* Was the genre rock?

*Mitsuo:* Not always [...] there was sometimes classical music playing.

*KK:* Classical music?

*Mitsuo:* I also liked it.

*KK:* How long was the music played?

*Mitsuo:* Well [...] 5 hours.

*KK:* Five hours, it was quite long, wasn't it? When did you find that you were

in a special circumstance of music?

*Mitsuo:* When my mother started a rock bar. I was in the fifth year in elementary school then.

Mitsuo commented that he suddenly became interested in the Beatles in the winter of the third year (Year 9) in junior high school. Before that, he bought only a couple of CDs of charts music in order to 'buy something *by myself*'. His interests shifted from charts music as the common music of his own generation to classic rock as the standard music which he shared with his parents' generation. Although he had not expressed interest in the music which was played in his home a year before, it is significant that he said 'I've *listened* to the music which was played in my home' instead of saying 'I've *heard* the music'.

As discussed in Chapter 3, Bourdieu suggested that cultural capital can exist in three forms: the embodied state, the objectified state, and the institutionalized state (Bourdieu 1986: 243). In the case of Mitsuo, cultural capital in the objectified state, which was his parents' record collection, had constructed his musical identity at home. However, as this form of cultural capital can produce its effect only in relation to cultural capital in the embodied form, which equates with habitus, his everyday listening practices at home were crucial in making him a rock enthusiast. His case shows us how listening practices at home are important for youths who become popular music enthusiasts. Bourdieu's 'Arrow effect', meaning that all cultural goods of the childhood environment 'exert an educative effect by their mere existence' (Bourdieu 1986: 255 n°7) was crucial to the development of Mitsuo's musical orientation at home. In this respect, Mitsuo relied on inherited capital from his parents rather than acquired capital from peer groups of his own generation. In particular, cultural capital in both objectified and embodied states had reciprocally developed Mitsuo's musical orientation, making a clear contrast to boy performers in the expressive band, discussed in Chapter 6, who constructed their knowledge of rock music as acquired capital accumulated through peer band group interaction.

It is noteworthy that Mitsuo did not wish to share rock with his peers.

[Interview 23]

*KK:* Is there a folk song club in your high school?

*Mitsuo:* Yeah, there is.

*KK:* Don't you hope to join it?

*Mitsuo:* Not particularly [pause]

*KK:* Why? Because of the musical tastes?

*Mitsuo:* I want to do what I was really wanting to do.

*KK:* You mean, even if you join the folk song club in school, you will not be able to do what you were hoping to do. Am I right?

*Mitsuo:* Yeah.

*KK:* What are you hoping to do at the moment?

*Mitsuo:* I want to listen to records of my parents' collection as many as possible.

*KK:* One record after another?

*Mitsuo:* Yeah. One record after another [laugh].

Rather than sharing rock with his peers, Mitsuo identified himself with his parents and an older musician aged around 30, who played guitar and taught Mitsuo what to listen to next, which was how he accumulated his knowledge of rock. Mitsuo's attitude towards rock tended towards that of an individualistic nerd listener who withdraws into his shell and rejects all communication with ordinary music listeners. Even when he showed a passion for a rendition of the blues, Mitsuo felt no need to copy it, but was content to merely accumulate such knowledge. In his case, knowledge of rock music came first, and performance followed; in direct reversal to other boys inside and outside school, who wanted to copy immediately.

Mitsuo's desire for knowledge of rock may have been inherited from his record-collecting father. During the interview, Mitsuo seldom mentioned artists or band names.

[Interview 23]

*KK:* Do you want to go to gigs?

*Mitsuo:* Yeah, I want to go.

*KK:* Have you ever been to gigs?

*Mitsuo:* Once, Aerosmith.

*KK:* How did you find it? Which was better, the live performance, or the



record?

*Mitsuo:* Well [...] I didn't think it was excellent [...] I was a bit impressed with it, yeah.

Mitsuo had been surrounded by so much information about rock that he did not claim any as his personal music, and, like members of the nerd band in Chapter 6, was cautious not to disclose his personal music even in the informal space. Because his musical world was entirely domestic and concealed from his peers, Mitsuo had not developed strategies for establishing his identity in conversations about popular music. Hence, his discourse about his personal music was the most ambiguous of all the boys in the semi-formal and informal spaces.

I have elucidated various aspects of boys as performers/listeners inside and outside school. The differences between boy performers/listeners with inherited capital and boy performers/listeners with acquired capital as well as the differences between boys and girls with inherited capital will be discussed in Chapter 8.

### ***7.1.2 Girl Listeners in the Indie Record Shop***

As I have said before, 1998 was the peak year of the visual pop/rock boom in Japan, which is why both female and male pupils so often refer to it in my ethnographic work that was carried out at that time. In this section, I explain how indie band girl listeners found visual rock interesting in the context of Japanese mass culture, then focus on the particular practices of 'visual band costume playing girls', who demonstrate most clearly the deep relationship between girls and personal music.

Both female and male 'indie' fans have increased in Japan recently. In my fieldwork, while some of them, called '*indicchi*', inconstantly followed several well-known indie bands at the same time, many desperately sought highly obscure bands which do not get media exposure and have been kept in the 'dark'. In the informal space, high school pupils showed the 'dark' side of their musical orientations, in striking contrast to the 'cleanness' or 'freshness' shown by boys as performers in the semi-formal space of the band event.

Indie band fans, who were either male band performers or ardent female listeners, had supported the boom of indie bands in contemporary Japan. In particular,

girl listeners who proclaimed themselves ‘dark’, escaped from high schools and came together in leisure sites such as indie record shops or gig venues to seek comfortable spaces where they did not have to care how others assessed them, and did not need to act as ‘good high school girls’. The two girl indie band listeners below demonstrate this feature:

[Interview 24; indie band listener 1 (f) and indie band listener 2 (f); record shop]

*KK:* Do you listen to bands which contract with major record companies?

*Listener 1:*<sup>2</sup> Nope. As I became interested in much darker music, such as Malice [Malice Mizer, CD-ROM 12] or [...] there are so many ordinary visual bands. But I really prefer to listen to much darker bands which are still in the dark behind the major music scene.

*KK:* Do you like the indie band which nobody knows?

*Listener 1:* Yeah, but indie visual band fans know them.

*Listener 2:* We actually know them very well.

*KK:* Where do you go to attend gigs?

*Listener 1:* Rockets or Brand New in Osaka, as my favourite band plays in them.

*KK:* Are the CDs of your favourite band sold in ordinary record shops?

*Listener 1:* Nope. It’s an amateur band.

*KK:* So, it has not contracted with a major record company.

*Listener 2:* I think some bands have already done [...] haven’t they? How about Brown Honey?

*Listener 1:* Yeah, Brown Honey.

*Listener 2:* Besides Brown Honey [...] How about [...]

These two girls continued to name many indie visual bands in front of me, perhaps in order to show off their knowledge. Their faces filled with pleasure when they talked about each indie visual band as their personal music, thereby sharing their enthusiasm of their common music, i.e. indie visual popular. Girl indie band listeners preferred to meet in indie record shops or gig venues where they could let themselves go. An owner

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<sup>2</sup> As interviews on indie band listeners were conducted on an anonymous basis through brief encounters in town, I refer to the interviewees by numbers.

of an indie record shop in *America-mura* commented as follows:<sup>3</sup>

[Interview 25; Atsumi-san, the owner (f); indie record shop]

The age range of my customers is from junior high school pupils to around 30. They usually visit alone, 'cause they can't find like-minded friends in school. They come to this shop and often make complaints to me. Although they have come to like visual pop bands, their ordinary friends speak ill of them saying 'How weird! Boy performers make up'. So, visual band fans escape from school and seek like-minded friends in this shop. Actually, for the seventeen-year-old or eighteen-year-old girls, they can easily get very nervous in front of the established bands. In this regard, indie bands look much more familiar to them. Teenagers seem to find indie bands very accessible.

In 1998, many indie visual pop/rock bands released CDs which were sold in indie record shops all around Japan. This female owner was regarded as a 'friendly advisor' by teenagers, and her indie record shop had become a shelter from the 'persecution' of their musical orientation in school. Although these interviews were only brief encounters in record shops and gig venues, girl indie band listeners seemed willing to talk openly about their personal music, which gave me the impression that they sincerely sought after somebody who understood them beyond their narrow social networks at school.

### ***7.1.3 Girl Listeners in the Visual Band Costume Play Gathering***

Compared to indie band listeners who were balanced between girls and boys,<sup>4</sup> visual band costume players were dominated by female fans. Hence, the relationship between girl listeners and popular music becomes clearest in the informal space of the visual band costume play gathering. From July to November 1998, I attended gatherings as well as visual rock karaoke gigs in Osaka. While the former were organised by the girls themselves, the latter were run by a male DJ from FM 802, who had a popular

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<sup>3</sup> Interviewed on 28<sup>th</sup> July 1998. *America-mura* is a famous area in Osaka, in which street culture such as hip-hop, rap, dance and street fashion are exchanged among youngsters.

<sup>4</sup> But, in the case of male visual rock listeners, they played in bands at the same time.

radio programme on visual rock every Friday night in 1998.<sup>5</sup> Karaoke gigs were called ‘*Bakuhatsu sunzen* night’ [The night is about to explode], after a title of X Japan’s live gig video. DJ Hiroaki Asai played CDs of visual rock in these karaoke gigs, which were attended by many visual band costume playing girls. According to him, since 1997, when X Japan had broken up, and Luna Sea and L’arc~en~ciel had stopped playing, girl costume players had sought for a new space to have a spree with their costumes outside concerts by visual rock bands.

It is only since 1998 that costume players of visual rock bands such as Malice Mizer, Luna Sea and GLAY, have made an appearance in public, but their practices date back to around 1990 when enthusiasts of X<sup>6</sup> started to imitate their gaudy costumes, make-up and hair styles because of their worship for this cult rock band. In this section I discuss how, whereas boy performers of the expressive bands in the semi-formal space were ‘wannabes’ of visual rock bands through playing in bands, girls in the informal space were also enthusiastic to copy visual rock bands, but through costume playing.

Lewis (1990) discussed the subculture of costume playing, avid female fans of Madonna and Cyndi Lauper in the mid-1980s in the United States. She suggested that these wannabe girls behaved in concerts and fan events as ‘both textual representations and textual producers, as audiences and as performers’ (Lewis 1990: 174). Because Lewis regarded costume playing as not mere consumption, but as a meaningful form of production, she understood such activities as the antithesis to the consumerism that adolescent girls had been accused of. According to Lewis, ‘Lauper’s address to girls who “wanted to have fun” helped open the rock concert venue to female fans and their displays of style imitation’ (*ibid.*: 174), and she criticised current explanations of Madonna fans by journalism:

The ‘trendy’ classification was linked to another damning accusation, that Madonna’s representations and the ‘wanna-bes’ responses were nothing more than consumerism run rampant, a merchandising ploy. The mention of consumerism is a traditional way to avoid crediting popular culture with political

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<sup>5</sup> I would like to thank the DJ, Hiroaki Asai for giving helpful information on visual band costume playing girls.

<sup>6</sup> X Japan changed its name from ‘X’ in 1992 in order to embark on the international market.

implications, as if the practice of consumption is thoroughly unmotivated by interest or directed use (*ibid.*: 204).

Lewis concluded that '[t]he emergence of female-adolescent discourse on MTV is important politically because it has provided a vehicle for girls to speak about their experiences as female adolescents' (*ibid.*: 224). Nevertheless, she cautioned that 'it is also important because it has expanded the consideration of gender inequality to include adolescence, thus beginning the much needed work of acknowledging the fact that oppressed women begin their lives as oppressed girls' (*ibid.*: 224).

Whilst the costume playing of female wannabes of Madonna and Cyndi Lauper in the mid-1980s in the United States, and that of visual rock bands in the late 1990s in Japan are similar, there are important differences. Whilst the former copied the appearance of the *same sex*, the latter copied that of the *opposite sex*. In this regard, wannabes' visual band costume playing in Japan could be understood as an alternative to boy members' copying the music of visual rock by playing in bands.

In the case of Madonna/Lauper wannabes:

The fans...are dressed according to their own sense of what was appropriate for concert attendance. In other words, they were not motivated by an organized competition, as was the case with Macy's 'look-alike' contest, and in all likelihood had no expectation that anyone would ask to take their photograph...They had dressed for themselves and for those attending the concert. (Lewis 1990: 175)

In general, the looks of the fans...support the notion that everyday fan practice involves a good deal of appropriation, the 'stealing' of star style objects for use in the fans' own creative self-presentations, rather than straight imitation. Lauper and Madonna encourage multiple interpretations of their looks by making frequent changes in their own appearance. (*ibid.*: 184)

Wannabe visual band costume playing girls in Japan tried to imitate their icon rock stars in every detail. The following conversation took place between GLAY costume

playing girls. All costume players have their 'cos-name' (costume playing name), which can be divided into two categories; first, the name of their icon stars; second, rather unrealistic and dreamy nicknames which are very close to the stage names of the Takarazuka Revue (see p. 59). In this thesis I call costume players after their icons' names in order of appearance in my interview.

[Interview 26; Jirô-cos (f), Takuro-cos 1 (f), Teru-cos 1 (f) and Hisashi-cos 1 (f); gig venue]

*Jirô-cos:* My costume today costs 30 thousand yen [approximately 150 pounds]. But I'm satisfied with this, 'cause my costume is made by the same company as Jirô [the bassist of GLAY].

*Takuro-cos 1:* In my case, I bought the matching shirt as Takuro [the guitarist of GLAY] wore a couple of months before. But the other day, when I watched TV, he appeared wearing the same shirt with cut sleeves! So, I immediately cut the sleeves of my shirt following him, though it was very expensive [.]

*Jirô-cos:* In these days, there have increased very low-level GLAY costume players who just wear suits. I found it disappointing [*sûtsu kitadake de 'GLAY' tte kanji de muccha reberu hikukute gakkari shita*].

This Jirô-cos girl said that she began GLAY costume playing because she 'really wanted to be the same as Jirô'. These GLAY costume playing girls followed concerts of GLAY all around Japan with perfect costume and make-up, and were well-known amongst other GLAY fans, who would photograph them. In order to attend all GLAY's concerts with costumes, they worked part-time every night and weekend, although they were still high school pupils. The Jirô-cos girl explained the attractiveness of costume play as follows:

[Interview 27; Jirô-cos (f) ; gig venue]

We costume players live in various places, in Kyoto, Osaka or Wakayama. So, in order to play together, we have to travel all the way from various places. But we found it worthy to pay railway fares for our gatherings, as it's very comfortable.

So, in school [...] in school [...] I found that nobody suits me. I really prefer to join with my costume playing friends outside school. It's really pleasant and it's like my reason for living [laugh]. Saying 'my reason for living' [*ikigai*], does it sound unhip [*dasai*]?

The motivation for costume playing girls to imitate their icon rock stars' appearances originally stemmed from their affection towards visual rock bands as their personal music, but in order to keep their 'ordinary friends', they sung non-visual popular songs, such as renditions of Judy And Mary (CD-ROM, Track 6), as 'common music'.

[Interview 27]

KK: Members of GLAY are all male, but you all are girls. I was wondering why you devote yourself to such a degree. What was the reason for opting for visual-*kei*? Did you start costume playing because you were fond of GLAY's music?

*Jirô-cos*: I loved their songs. They just happened to be visual-*kei*. Of course, I listen to ordinary songs. For example [...] when I go to karaoke, I mainly sing Judi-Mari.

KK: Wow! How ordinary you are!

*Jirô-cos*: And I sing Komuro-*kei* songs. No [...] how can I say [...] that kind of 'miscellaneous knowledge' is necessary. If I don't have it, I can't live in ordinary society [laugh].

KK: Is your costume playing persona entirely different from your everyday life persona?

*Jirô-cos*: Yeah, so, in everyday life, I pretend to be my other self.

So whilst GLAY costume playing girls intensely identified with their icon GLAY members in their peer culture, they acted as ordinary citizens in their everyday school or home settings, where the tactical utilisation of common music served to conceal their personal music in front of schoolmates. For girl visual rock fans, costume playing culture was much more accessible than band performing culture which was dominated by male fans. Now, 'costume playing' is one of the most important aspects of an

‘alternative female subculture’ in Japan, since, in addition to attending favourite bands’ concerts, costume playing girls enjoyed getting together in costume play gatherings and costume play dance parties where they chatted or took photographs of each other.

Visual band costume playing girls in Japan can be divided into two categories: wannabes of their icon rock stars and ‘expressive nerds’. Having discussed the former, I now focus on the latter. I have coined the term ‘expressive nerd’ (*hyôgenkei-no-otaku*, for *otaku*, see p. 82 and also see p. 191 below), to refer to that most interesting phenomenon of the alternative female subculture in Japan, and to name it as the counterpart of ‘the collecting nerd’, who is almost always male (Koizumi 1999a). Features of ‘expressive nerd’ costume playing girls are also present in indie band listeners: firstly, seeking darker forms of expression; secondly, seeking friendship outside school; and thirdly, seeking shelter from alienated schoolmates. I will elucidate features of visual band costume playing girls as ‘expressive nerds’ one by one.

Wannabe girl visual rock fans originated from X fans in the early 1990s, which can be called ‘the *first* visual band costume playing boom’; and costume playing girls as ‘expressive nerds’ originated from animation culture and animation costume-playing culture in the late 1990s, which can be called ‘the *second* visual band costume playing boom’. The difference between these two costume playing booms is that, while the former was based on feelings of admiration for rock, the latter regarded visual rock stars as mere ‘models for costume playing’. Costume playing girls of the late 1990s showed no signs of idolatry. One told me, ‘Although I wear the costume of Izam (the vocalist of a visual idol pop band, Shazna, CD-ROM, Track 15) today, I am going to cheer Pierrot (a visual rock band which was famous for its satanical lyrics during their indie label days) at a gig tonight’; and another said ‘My regular business is Hide (the guitarist of X Japan). Gackt (the then vocalist of Malice Mizer) is only my side business’. These girls seemed proud to go back and forth between several visual rock bands, in marked contrast to the devotedness of the earlier wannabe girls. These expressive nerd girls’ flexible attitudes towards visual rock bands was a result of their exploration of darker forms of musical and visual expression.

[Interview 28; Takuro-cos 2 (f), Teru-cos 2 (f) and Hisashi-cos 2 (f); record shop]

KK:                      What do you think about the attractiveness of visual rock?



- Teru-cos 2:*<sup>7</sup> For me, all. A view of the world of visual rock perfectly suits me.
- Hisashi-cos 2:*<sup>8</sup> Yeah, I agree with you.
- Teru-cos 2:* They have a perfect view of the world, which is sometimes their music, sometimes their appearance, or lyrics.
- KK:* The whole thing.
- Takuro-cos 2:* It has cheered me up. Before listening to visual rock, I was fed up with my life. But when I encountered visual rock [.]
- Hisashi-cos 2:* I could get over everything. Like ‘Why don’t I cheer up?’ [laugh]
- KK:* Does it make you cheerful?
- Takuro-cos 2:* Yeah, it makes me cheerful.
- Teru-cos 2:* Through visual rock, I can get into my real self.
- Takuro-cos 2:* Yeah, like entering my own world.
- Hisashi-cos 2:* ‘Cause visual rock has a completely different world from other genres.
- Teru-cos 2:* I never pay any attention to words of other genres.
- Hisashi-cos 2:* I hate other genres, ‘cause they are too realistic.
- Takuro-cos 2:* I sympathise with visual rock in unrealistic words.
- Teru-cos 2:* I found their theme ‘the tragedy of the human spirit’ [*seishin no hisan*].
- Hisashi-cos 2:* It’s not clean at all. They sing of dreadful love.<sup>9</sup>
- Teru-cos 2:* It’s really original.

These girls had found an alternative musical world to that of mainstream popular songs or so-called J-pop, and valued the visual rock bands’ integration of make-up, gaudy

<sup>7</sup> Teru is the vocalist of Glay.

<sup>8</sup> Hisashi is the guitarist of Glay.

<sup>9</sup> For example, in ‘Blue Transparency’, Luna Sea describes death from heroine addiction as follows:

<i>hari de doku wo nonda</i>	I’ve drunk poison with a needle
<i>obieta yoru ni</i>	in the frightening night
<i>risei ga nukedete yuku</i>	I’ve lost control of myself

<i>te wo saku haken</i>	a splinter in my hand
<i>kagirinaku tômei ni chikai blue</i>	endless, almost transparent blue
<i>ikiteita to kanjirareta</i>	thus I could feel that I had lived
<i>shiroi kona wa kieru</i>	white powder disappears

<i>chi no nagare ga itai</i>	My dripping blood hurts
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costumes and mysterious lyrics.

These expressive nerd girls were disgusted by some visual rock bands' 'betrayal' of their erstwhile aesthetic codes in order to appeal to the Japanese mass culture market.

[Interview 28]

KK: Will you go to the Break Out *Matsuri* [Festival]?

Takuro-cos 2: I'm not interested in it, 'cause Shazna or La'cryma [La'cryma Christi, a visual pop band] will join in.

KK: Who is listening to them? Junior high school girls?

Hisashi-cos 2: Perhaps they listen to them.

Takuro-cos 2: I am angry about Shazna.

Hisashi-cos 2: Me too. I stopped listening to them.

KK: Did you like them?

Hisashi-cos 2: They are no longer visual-kei.

Takuro-cos 2: When they sang as an indie band, I adored them.

KK: So, did you stop listening to them when they signed up with a major record company?

Takuro-cos 2: Yeah. They are now *burikko*.<sup>10</sup>

Teru-cos 2: They are not visual-kei. Izam becomes a mere girl.

Hisashi-cos 2: Like a solo singer.

Takuro-cos 2: Performers behind him are just like dancing. I liked them when they played as a band. Making up like me [pointing to her made-up face].

Teru-cos 2: Formerly, he had the gap between feminine costume and make-up with masculine low voice. I found it really cool.

Hisashi-cos 2: After becoming a popular singer, he sings the same song in a very sweet way.

Teru-cos 2: He becomes a TV entertainer.

Takuro-cos 2: He intentionally raises his voice very high.

Teru-cos 2: I accept him as he is now. But I really hate to hear that many call

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<sup>10</sup> 'Burikko' [posing girls] always try to act cute. Idol girl singers are regarded as representative of

him 'visual-*kei*'.

Thus, costume playing girls adored and criticised visual pop singers. As well as regretting Izam's 'betrayal', they also regretted the transformation of 'Ryûichi', the vocalist of Luna Sea, into 'Ryûichi Kawamura', the solo singer with a 'sissy' voice (see p. 167). Girl listeners valued highly the visual rock singer's combination of an androgynous body with a masculine voice, rather than a boy-next-door with a sweet, feminine voice. So whenever visual vocalists became very popular on television, the costume playing girls had to look for another 'perfect' androgynous singer to express Gothic and mysterious worlds.

Whereas the wannabes of icon visual rock performers began costume playing in order to 'be close to the existence of band members', an expressive nerd girl said 'We scorn GLAY, while X costume playing fans admire the members'. This gives us a clue as to why the expressive nerd girls spread their icons across various visual rock bands. As I elucidated in Chapter 4 (p. 82), the nerd is called '*otaku*' in Japanese, originating from when male collectors of Japanese animation called others 'you' instead of by their real names when they exchanged goods, and suggesting a general refusal of mutual communication with others. Now however, the meaning of *otaku* has broadened to include various forms of maniacs. *Otaku* also refers to enthusiasts of amateur comic writing girls, which, since 1975, have been sold in comic markets. In the 1980s, some of these amateur girl comic artists were influenced by homosexually-oriented professional comic artists working for *shôjo-manga* [a comic for girls]. Such girls were called '*yaoi*', an acronym of '*yama-nashi, ochi-nashi, imi-nashi*', which translates as 'no climax, no ending, no meaning'. '*Yaoi*' has come about as the result of a rapidly increasing comic market in Japan. In contrast to male 'collecting nerds' of figures, trading cards and records (see 7.1.1; see also Straw 1997), *yaoi* girls do not collect goods. Instead, these girls express their maniacal energy through drawing comics or writing novels centered on beautiful male homosexuals, such as the protagonist of the English film *Maurice* (directed by James Ivory, 1987), which became an icon for Japanese *yaoi* girls. *Yaoi* girls can be interpreted as adolescents needing simulations of love and sex through fantasy in order to accept their femininity

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*burikko*, in particular, by listeners of the same sex.

as adult women without danger. The homosexual stories of *yaoi* girls' novels and comics are an alternative to their experience of heterosexual love and sex in their real lives.<sup>11</sup> In the late 1990s, costume playing girls gradually noticed the unrealistic world of so-called 'theatrical-*kei*' visual rock bands, such as Malice Mizer. The second visual band costume playing boom of 1998 was therefore an extension of the amateur girl comic artists and animation or computer game characters developed in the comic market in the 1970s.<sup>12</sup> Since 1998, visual band costume playing girls began to congregate not only at gigs and concerts of visual rock bands, but also at costume play gatherings organised by themselves.

Whereas wannabes copied their icon visual rock stars as perfectly as possible, expressive nerd girls regarded the members of visual rock bands as mere material for their expressive costume playing, similarly to Madonna wannabes, who, '[i]n imitating Madonna's look... demonstrate their adeptness at reading textual products' (Lewis 1990: 204). The nerd girls' practices are much closer to those of the amateur girl comic artists than to those of boy wannabe performers and girl wannabe costume players who both copy visual bands. It can be said that visual bands in Japan have opened up a space for girls to have fun in the rock world, which had until then been dominated by male aficionados. For expressive nerd girls, as Frow argued, with reference to de Certeau, 'consumption is that set of tactics by which the weak make use of the strong' (Frow 1991: 53), or in other words, the practice of costume playing means the tactical representation of girls' presence in a male-dominated rock culture.

Indeed, the Teru-cos 2 girl was at first a costume player of computer game characters until she had become interested in visual rock because of its gaudy make-up, costumes and mysterious lyrics. She clearly differentiated herself as a costume playing, 'expressive nerd' from the wannabe band fan. However, she concealed her origins as a game costume player at band costume play gatherings because she feared that 'visual band fans may scorn me if they know I am an *otaku*'.

[Interview 29; Teru-cos 2 (f); costume play gathering in the park]

In these days, both band fans and costume players of animation and computer

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<sup>11</sup> For *yaoi* writers of printed amateur comic [*manga*] so-called '*dōjinshi*', see Kinsella (2000).

<sup>12</sup> For a further discussion of the crossover between visual rock costume playing culture and animation costume playing culture, see Koizumi (1999a).

games have joined together. But before that, animation *otaku* and band fans never met, 'cause the two were very different. I never uncover in front of band fans that I came from a game *otaku*. I think there are so many other game *otaku* in costume play gatherings, but probably they will not come out that they are *otaku*.

Whilst visual rock was the common music among girls in costume play gatherings, the subcultural superiority of band fans as wannabes over costume playing nerds reflects the traditional hierarchy of boys' *active, public* performance over girls' *passive, private* listening (see McRobbie 1980/1990). Because of rock's reproduction of the traditional gender hierarchy, the expressive nerd costume playing girls still found it difficult to discuss their personal music and resorted to tactics, even in the informal space.

The second characteristic of expressive nerd girls is their search for friendship outside school. A Toshiya-cos girl<sup>13</sup> told me that she was invited by her friends to do costume playing, as she was good at making costumes. She said 'Once I started doing costume playing and attending gatherings, I couldn't stop'. Notebooks kept in a visual rock booth of a record shop in Osaka<sup>14</sup> were important to her for exchanging information with other 'cos *tomo*' [costume playing friends]. In these notebooks, costume playing girls wrote of their passion for visual bands, and costume playing, and gave information about coming costume playing gatherings. They were full of photographs and *puri-kura* [print club], a tiny photo seal popular among Japanese youngsters (see also the footnote to p. 150); and took on the role of producing a network of costume playing girls. In my ethnographic study, most of these girls knew the notebooks and actively utilised them. The Toshiya-cos girl seemed proud of her network of costume playing friends outside school and talked to me in a very friendly way about her experiences of costume playing gatherings.

An Izam-cos girl commented that she envied the male friendships within visual rock bands. Although she came to a visual band event in Izam costume, she was really an admirer of Hide, the guitarist of X Japan who committed suicide in May 1998. X Japan influenced girl listeners in the informal space and boy performers in the semi-

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<sup>13</sup> Toshiya is a bassist of Dir en Grey, a visual rock band.

<sup>14</sup> I would like to thank Hiroaki Ishimaru, the chief manager of a Japanese popular music at Miyako Shinsaibashi, for allowing me to interview costume playing girls in the shop.

formal space. Many girl listeners, whether wannabes or expressive nerds, said that they started costume playing under the influence of X Japan. The Takuro-cos 2 girl called X Japan ‘the *father* of visual rock’. Izam cos girl talked as follows:

[Interview 30; Izam-cos (f); concert hall]

KK: What do you think about the attractiveness of visual rock?

Izam-cos: I don’t know what visual-*kei* is [.]. Even if I listen to their music...but I found their music very good.

KK: Don’t you listen to other genres besides visual rock, do you?

Izam-cos: No. I put importance on the network of male friendship of visual bands. I continue to listen to new bands when members of them are friends of my favourite bands. I [.]. previously, I seldom made friends with others, ‘cause [.]. I never believed others.

KK: Didn’t you believe friends?

Izam-cos: Never. But Hide taught me that friendship is wonderful!

KK: Well [.].

Izam-cos: That’s the reason why I started to listen to visual rock.

KK: So, did you find Hide’s music your best friend when you had no friends in your life?

Izam-cos: Yeah. Thank to him, my friendship has widened. He told me the pleasure of friendship and totally changed my view on the world. So, he’s almost [.].

KK: What a great influence!

Izam-cos: Therefore, for me, X is very important.

The Izam-cos girl seemed to identify not with the music, but with the social network of visual bands. In this respect, it can be said that she was a kind of a wannabe who longed for the solidarity within rock bands that is so often lacking in female friendships. For this adolescent girl, copying the male solidarity of visual bands was much more meaningful than performing their songs.

The third feature of the expressive nerd girls, that is, seeking shelter from alienated schoolmates, closely relates to the second feature. In my fieldwork, the age

range of visual band costume playing girls was wide. Whereas costume play gatherings were organised by female workers, who could afford money and time to involve themselves in fan activities, around half the participants were high school or junior high school pupils. At costume play gatherings, girls came to recognise their own femininity. The older costume players developed solidarity with the younger ones, and so the gatherings became a close female community. The Jirô-cos girl mentioned above found this solidarity meaningful:

[Interview 27; Jirô-cos (f) ; gig venue]

Costume playing promotes dreams. It costs dearly and I can't earn any money, but I can feel I promote dreams. So, for ordinary (non-costume) fans, they can't talk with real GLAY members, but they CAN talk with GLAY-cos (costume) players. So, I listen to ordinary fans telling me their worries on behalf of the real Jirô.

This 'counsellor' role could be seen as one of the most important aspects of costume playing as a female alternative subculture. A Gackt-cos girl explained her typical everyday life as follows:

[Interview 31; Gackt-cos (f) ; costume play gathering in the park]

When I go back home, I sit in my room alone and start to read many letters from other Malice-cos [Malice Mizer's costume] players, listening to Malice Mizer CDs. They seem to have so many worries about interpersonal relationships. After reading them, then, I write answers to letters of my cos-friends. That's a typical afternoon in my life.

Only the members of the costume playing circles of visual bands recognise 'visual-*kei*' as a distinct style, which, visual rock as acquired capital, serves to differentiate themselves from ordinary J-pop listeners. While GLAY costume playing girls intensely identified with their icon members in the peer culture, they acted as ordinary citizens in their everyday school or home settings in order to conceal their private self-constructions through costume playing. Girls' tactics for protecting their personal music still seemed tense even in the informal space.

Costume playing girls placed great importance on ‘*honne* talk’ [honesty] in their gatherings. A Mana-cos girl<sup>15</sup> repeatedly told me of the value of friendship within costume play gatherings in phrases such as ‘now, my costume playing friend gives herself away *very much*’. Although she had been listening to Malice Mizer for over two years, an experience of costume playing in a comic market a month previously caused her to shift from passive listener to active costume player. In addition, female physicality, which is oppressed in schools, took on an important role in costume playing culture as a means to restore oppressed bodies. Visual band costume players, who confirm their own physicality effectively by way of the gazes of the same sex, are a particular form of ‘expressive nerds’, who can be traced back to the comic nerds, called ‘*yaoi*’.

Girls who had been oppressed in other spaces seemed to find their identity in costume playing subculture. In order to guard this ‘Promised Land’, costume playing girls developed tactics for keeping their personal music, that is, visual rock, concealed at school and home so as to avoid invasion from outsiders. Furthermore, costume playing girls often shift their identity along with their allegiance to various visual rock bands, changing their costume accordingly. By using such ambiguous tactics, the costume playing culture of wannabe girls and expressive nerds made the female alternative culture of Japanese girl listeners idiosyncratic.

## 7.2 Rock Performers in Leisure Sites

### 7.2.1 *Boys in the Band Peer Group*

Boys as performers in the informal space all seemed to enjoy expressing themselves in their subcultural peer group band. Freedom from adult surveillance enabled them to disclose their personal music among peers. In August 1998, I interviewed members of Rocket Punch, which consisted of a girl vocalist Miyo and 4 boys: Shû (guitarist), Ken (first bassist), Hiroshi (second bassist) and Satoru (drummer). As an exception to my fieldwork, I collaborated in this interview with two members of a research group who were conducting a ‘Study on Commercial Film Music’.<sup>16</sup> Rocket Punch was organised

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<sup>15</sup> Mana is the guitarist of Malice Mizer who is famous for his ‘Western antique doll’ costume.

<sup>16</sup> This project was run by Professor Hiroshi Ogawa of Kansai University, and its first year was financed by Yoshida Hideo Kinen Zaidan. I would like to thank my colleagues in this research group for giving a reward to the members of Rocket Punch from the research fund.



by Shû, Ken and Satoru when they were together at junior high school. All apart from Ken were second year (Year 11) pupils on the Grade Course at High School X. I met them when they did a gig in their school festival in June 1998, when I was looking for boy and girl performers in schools, but as there was no folk song club in the school, and Rocket Punch occasionally played outside school, I attended one of their gigs in July 1998 at a community centre near the school. Two weeks later, I interviewed band members about their personal music and musical practices. Shû welcomed the interviewers and collected other members, apart from Miyo, the girl vocalist, who did not attend. The core of Rocket Punch was Shû and Ken's peer network, but Miyo was a friend of Satoru's girlfriend, and was therefore hesitant about joining the male subcultural peer group of Rocket Punch for this discussion. Instead, Mami, Shû's girlfriend and a vocalist of Shy (I will discuss this all-girl band later in this chapter), joined the interview, along with Akira, who went to the same private school as Ken, and called himself a 'manager' of Rocket Punch, as he could not play any instruments. In this section, I analyse male members' discourses, and consider the girl vocalists, that is, Miyo and Mami, in the next.

In the semi-formal setting, as already discussed, several boys denied any influences by family members and emphasised the originality of their musical tastes. By contrast, in the informal space, two boys of Rocket Punch openly demonstrated that they had learnt much from their fathers about classic British/US-American rock, which had provided their inherited capital in Bourdieu's term. In this regard, Rocket Punch reminds us of the classic-rock-oriented band in the band event discussed in Chapter 6. However, whereas boy performers in that band were influenced by X Japan and exchanged their acquired capital with their contemporaries, two boys of Rocket Punch had inherited classic British/US-American rock as inherited capital directly from their fathers. In this sense they were male counterparts of girl listeners in the classroom in Chapter 5, who identified with the music of their mothers' generation and made use of standard music as a tool for differentiating their musical taste from that of their contemporaries (p. 110). The difference between the boy performers in Rocket Punch and the girl listeners in the classroom is that whereas the former took over rock, the latter took over folk song or *kayôkyoku*.

During the interview with members of Rocket Punch, it became clear that Ken

and Shû, whose fathers were amateur rock performers in their youths, played the role of opinion leaders, and taught their friends how and what to listen to. Under the influence of these two opinion leaders, 1970s and 1980s rock was propelled as the ‘common music’ of the band.

[Interview 32; Ken (m), Shû (m), Satoru (m), Hiroshi (m), Akira (m) and Mami (f); Shû’s room]

*KK:* Which artists do you like...anything else?

*Satoru:* Nowadays, I seldom listen to...but Bon Jovi is good!

*Ken & Shû:* Oh, great Bon Jovi!

*Satoru:* And Purple [Deep Purple]. Purple is good.

*Ken:* They are our roots.

*Satoru:* And [...] Aerosmith, a bit, really a bit.

As a novice rock lover, Satoru was in the process of learning *classic rock bands* from Ken and Shû, who had much more knowledge than the others.

[Interview 32]

*KK:* Do you ask anybody when you buy CDs? Or, do you buy your favourite artists’ CDs?

*Shû:* Let’s see [...] Dad buys a lot.

*KK:* Does your father like rock and heavy metal?

*Shû:* Rock CDs, he gets them as giveaways from pinball games.

*Akira:* His dad is very kind. He often comes here [Shû’s room] and says ‘Hey, Shû, there’s a programme on TV. The roots of rock’.

Whereas Shû’s rock knowledge was ‘inherited capital’ from his father, Satoru learnt it as ‘acquired capital’ from Ken and Shû. In this informal space, classic rock as the ‘common music’ of the band leads the ‘personal music’ of the novice enthusiasts. So whilst classic rock functions as ‘common music’ within the context of the band’s members who belong to the same generation, it functions as ‘standard music’ in relation to the boys’ fathers.

The parents of Japanese high school pupils today have listened to Western-European rock since the 1960s. Middle-aged Japanese people are often referred to as the Beatles generation, because they were so impressed by the Beatles when they visited in 1966, and have helped to legitimise rock since then. Both Shû's and Ken's fathers were typical of this generation, and encouraged their sons to repeat their own experiences as band performers in their youth. Shû's father even carried instruments and an amplifier in his car when Rocket Punch did their gigs.

Whilst Shû and Ken influenced one another, Satoru became enthusiastic about Western-European classic rock at the same time as Shû discovered Japanese visual rock.

[Interview 32]

*A (another interviewer):* What artists do you like?

*KK:* How about you, Shû?

*Shû:* Anything.

*A:* In particular [.]

*Shû:* In particular, Hide [the guitarist of X Japan].

*KK:* Are you into Hide at the moment?

*Shû:* Nope, I'm into Kuroyume [a visual rock duo, popular in 1998] at the moment.

*KK:* Kuroyume is very popular among your group.

*Akira:* He follows me.

*Shû:* Nope, it's a boom.

*Akira:* It's a boom in our group.

*Shû:* For me, Kuroyume is 'my boom'.<sup>17</sup>

*Akira:* For me, Kuroyume has been others' boom in these days.

*Ken:* I've said that Kuroyume is good many years since.

As can be seen, whenever a new artist was mentioned, Ken appreciated them. Ken constructed the musical identity of this band's peer group by means of his *embodied* cultural capital (Bourdieu 1986) of rock. Meanwhile, Shû supported his peer group by

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<sup>17</sup> An expression 'my boom' was very popular among youngsters in 1998.

means of his *objectified* cultural capital (*ibid.*), namely, CDs and his private room as a gathering place. In their conversation, Kuroyume was regarded as the most authentic Japanese rock band which comes next to Western-European classic rock bands.

The most remarkable feature of Ken's musical disposition was that his inherited capital had been accumulated from listening together with his father.

[Interview 32]

A: When did you start to listen to music?

Ken: Since I was a elementary school child.

Shû: Members in this room have listened to music since elementary school age.

M (another interviewer) : In what year? When is the earliest?

Satoru: In Year 5 or 6.

Shû: In Year 5, generally.

M: In Year 4 or 5?

Ken: I used to listen to Hikaru Genji [Johnny's idol group in the 1980s]. At the same time, I listened to Michael Jackson.

Akira: How could you listen to Hikaru Genji and Michael Jackson in parallel?

Ken: 'Cause my dad bought CDs at the same time. I used to listen to them.

A: At that time, did you have your own CD radio cassette recorder in your room?

Ken: Nope, I listened to them with dad.

Shû: How cool your family is!

KK: Your family is [.]. Does your father like *yôgaku*? As he listens to Michel Jackson [.]

Ken: He listens to *yôgaku* and contemporary dance music [.]

KK: How old is your father?

Ken: 47 or 48. So, he often buys popular dance music now and such as Southern All-stars.<sup>18</sup> From *yôgaku*, he listens to Mariah Carey [.]

As Bourdieu (1986) elucidated, cultural capital in the *embodied* state is unconsciously

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<sup>18</sup> Southern All-stars has maintained its status as the most popular rock band in Japan over 20

accumulated in the domestic space since early childhood, as it demands a great deal of time. Thanks to his embodied cultural capital, Ken was particularly well equipped to air his knowledge of popular music among his peers.

The next reason why Ken had the power to orient his peer group towards rock, of which he was so fond, was that he had accumulated acquired capital on top of his inherited capital. As Ken travelled through central Osaka to reach his private school, he had ready access to record shops such as Tower Records, HMV and Virgin Records, which stocked mainly Western-European CDs [*yôgaku*]. Meanwhile, the other three members (Shû, Satoru and Hiroshi) went to High School X, which is situated in areas that had only local record shops selling mainly Japanese popular music [*hôgaku*]. This difference of access to international/domestic record shops led Ken to differentiate himself from his peers. His way of accumulating knowledge of Western-European music was close to that of university or college students who have broader access to places such as gig venues and clubs.

The difference between private and statutory school backgrounds also seemed to divide the boys between those who knew and those who learnt. The encouragement of band activities in the private school prepared Ken to talk about popular music much more confidently than his peers in the statutory High School X.

[Interview 32]

*Ken:* In my school, band playing is active. The school is putting a great deal of effort into it, such as in a school festival.

*KK:* Is there a folk song club in extra-curricular activities in your school?

*Ken:* Nope.

*KK:* There isn't [...] so how do you play in bands?

*Ken:* We join bands individually. The performance level of pupils are very high.

*KK:* So, in the school festival, do bands appear in the foreground?

*Ken:* My school is really putting in the effort. The level of the stage is really [...] My school provides the necessary equipment, including a PA system. The sounds come from under.

- KK: The situation looks very different from that in your school, Shû.
- Ken: 'Cause mine is a private school.
- Satoru: How miserable our school is!
- .
- KK: But the music teacher told me that if you asked him to borrow an amplifier before the school festival, he could have provided it.
- Satoru: Why didn't he say so much earlier?
- Shû: The real fact was [.]
- KK: Well [.]
- Shû: We'd been cheated, 'cause teachers said that we have to provide equipment by ourselves.
- KK: When, in an audition for the school festival?
- Shû: Other teachers said so.
- KK: In the school festival?
- Shû: All settings.
- KK: That's why you provided equipment by yourself in the school festival.
- Satoru: There are two types of teachers – cooperative and not cooperative.
- Shû: So, an opponent of rock band [.]
- Ken: Even nowadays, teachers have a stereotyped image such as 'band members are delinquent pupils', 'Going bad' or [.]

This conversation offers insights into the difference between private and statutory high school boys in relation to band activities. Ken, whose fluency about popular music had been developed within private school, found it easy to disclose his 'differentiated' personal music, such as Swedish popular and Japanese indie bands. At the same time, he provided the band's 'common' musical identity.

To return to the previous transcript, Shû's reply of 'Anything' when asked about his favourite artists reminds us of Megumi, the female pupil in the music class in High School X discussed in Chapter 5. However, whilst Megumi's reply of 'Anything will do' was a way of being evasive about her personal music in public, Shû's 'Anything' signified his determination to accumulate a broader knowledge of popular music, like his mentor Ken. For Bourdieu, cultural capital in the *objectified* state can only be

effective in relation to cultural capital in the embodied form (Bourdieu 1986: 246). Due to his lack of affluent inherited capital compared to Ken, Shû was still in the process of becoming a well-informed performer.

By contrast to Ken and Shû, Satoru, the drummer of Rocket Punch, had been interested in rock music for two years under the influence of these peers. According to Satoru, before he started playing drums in the band, both he himself and his peers had underestimated him, and respected him only after he started to play. Satoru recalled a drastic change in his life due to the band. To understand his intense feeling about playing drums at that moment, I quote a longer transcript.

[Interview 32]

*A:* Did you want to play drums from the beginning?

*Satoru:* Nope. At first, I played guitar. As everyone played guitar, I thought guitar was cool. And when I was in the second year [Year 8] of junior high school, with Ken and Shû, we were planning to play something in a school festival in the next year. Then, my peers had to look for somebody who played drums. Although I was playing guitar at the time, I thought I couldn't play better than Ken and Shû. So, I made my mind to do a different thing. I thought if I did a different thing from what others did, I could attract attention. That's why I started to play drums. After all, we couldn't join the school festival of the third year [Year 9].

*Ken:* How rigid our junior high school was!

*KK:* Were you not allowed to join the stage?

*Ken:* We were not allowed to join it because teachers threw cold water on our ambition.

*Satoru:* We had to devote ourselves to preparing for an exam for admission to high school.

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*M:* Did you start to play drums and buy a drum kit at the same time?

*Satoru:* Yeah. If not, I would never play them. As I thought that I couldn't continue simple practices with drum sticks, I made up my mind to buy a drum kit.

- A:* Did you think that you could do from the first?
- Satoru:* Not at all. I couldn't see how to play drums. So, I listened to CDs and imagined how drummers play. But although I read books on drums, I couldn't understand what single stroke or double stroke were. At last, I played only cool phrases.
- M:* Did you teach yourself?
- Satoru:* Well, a male drummer in his early twenties, one of my dad's acquaintance, taught me how to play 8 beat. After learning that, I could gradually play drums and my musical world opened.
- Ken:* You are saying the same phrase as Pat [Pat Torpey, the drummer of Mr. Big) says.
- Satoru:* He said much higher level things. I [...] when I was in the third and second year of junior high school, I was badly mocked by peers.
- Ken:* Sounds like hell.
- Satoru:* Exactly. I felt as if I were in hell. I was regarded as the lowest of the peer group. My peers always asked me to buy something and I couldn't reject them. But as I started to play drums and could play a drum part of Deep Purple,
- All:* [Laugh]
- Shû:* Yeah!
- Satoru:* So, I can feel quite confident of my power!
- KK:* And you have got a pretty girlfriend who admires you!
- M:* Drums have changed your life, haven't they?
- Satoru:* It's really true.

Of particular importance is that band activities can develop adolescent self-confidence (see Green 2001). Playing in the band had enhanced the status of Satoru in his peer group, and he seemed enthusiastic to strengthen his position in the peer group by contributing to the classic rock, common music of the band. Hence, Satoru's personal music was the common music of Rocket Punch, which had originally been taken over from Ken' and Shû's fathers as 'standard music'. In addition, it is interesting that the other members of the band supported Satoru's construction of his musical identity



through his discourses on rock music. Even when Ken said ‘You are saying the same phrase as Pat says’, he never intended to belittle Satoru’s ambition for playing drums. Rather, Ken was complementing Satoru’s inferior, but nonetheless significant knowledge of rock. In so doing, Ken encouraged Satoru to understand himself as a would-be rock expert in the peer group setting.

Hiroshi, the other bassist of Rocket Punch, experienced a conflict between his personal music and the common music of the band. As mentioned earlier, Rocket Punch was based on Ken, Shû and Satoru’s junior high school peer network. Whilst Ken went to a private high school, he was nonetheless the key person of the band, and even though Rocket Punch needed another bassist when they played at High School X, Hiroshi was a deputy for Ken as a bassist, which was not easy for him. Throughout the interview, Hiroshi was inconspicuous compared to other members of the band, and seemed hesitant to join the peer group with Ken, the first and main bassist. The following conversation involved Hiroshi talking about his favourite artists.

[Interview 32]

*A:* What artists do you like? You said that you like Tamio Okuda [CD-ROM, Track 5], didn’t you?

*Hiroshi:* Formerly, I liked Tamio. But in these days, I haven’t listened to him.

*A:* Since when have you listened to Tamio?

*Hiroshi:* I’ve listened to Tamio since I was in the second year [Year 8] of junior high school.

*A:* Did you know Unicorn [a band in the late 1980s and early 1990s to which Tamio Okuda belonged as a vocalist and guitarist]?

*Hiroshi:* I used to listen to it. But nowadays [.]

*Akira:* Oh, he finally starts to talk.

*A:* Quiet, quiet please! [laughly]

*Hiroshi:* Nowadays, I listen to Hide and Kuroyume [.]

*Ken:* You listen to Hide because he committed suicide, don’t you?

*Hiroshi:* Pardon me?

*Ken:* You listen to Hide because he committed suicide, don’t you?

*KK:* Could you please explain more about your favourite artists?

*Hiroshi:* Hide and Kuroyume [...] and I like *Judi-Mari* [Judy and Mary] [shyly].

*Akira:* He likes Yuki-*chan*<sup>19</sup> [the female vocalist of Judy and Mary].

*Ken:* Are you serious?

*Hiroshi:* I've bought many of her photo collections.

*KK:* Were there any triggers for you to start playing guitar?

*Hiroshi:* Guitar?

*KK:* Were you influenced by Tamio?

*Hiroshi:* Well, one of my friends played guitar, so [...]

*KK:* When did you start?

*Hiroshi:* When I was in junior high school.

*KK:* Approximately when you became Tamio's fan?

*Hiroshi:* Yeah.

We see a contrast between Hiroshi's personal music – Tamio Okuda and Judy and Mary (guitar band, CD-ROM, Track 6) – and the common music of the band – Kuroyume and Hide (Japanese visual rock). However, in order to keep on good terms with his peers, Hiroshi made an effort to accommodate himself to the common music of the band. Ken tried to interrupt Hiroshi's talk of guitar bands, because they were foreign to the musical identity of Rocket Punch. Therefore, Ken had to eliminate this alien element, that is, guitar band, to keep the musical identity of the band, namely, classic rock and Japanese visual rock, which Ken had strategically constructed through his every discourse. Meanwhile, Ken also used the strategy of interrupting Hiroshi's talk of visual rock bands in order to relegate Hiroshi to a position of 'deputy' bassist of Ken's band.

The conflict between Hiroshi's personal music and the common music of the band made a twofold contrast: *hōgaku* versus *yōgaku*, and Japanese guitar band versus Japanese visual rock. Hiroshi belonged to a basketball club and played bass in the band only as a deputy for Ken, and seemed unconcerned to put forward his personal music, that is, guitar band and *hōgaku* in the peer setting. By contrast, it was crucial for Ken to eliminate any foreign element and so he carefully maintained the consistent identity of the band. As the band's common music was a symbol of the 'rock community' of

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<sup>19</sup> '*Chan*' is a Japanese suffix used to expression affection towards friends or young idol stars,

the male peer group, different kinds of music could not be allowed to enter.

The members of Rocket Punch did not compose any original music, although they all showed a deep interest in rock. As their vocalist was a girl, they performed songs by Judy and Mary, which, ironically, had nothing to do with the bands' common music, but was Hiroshi's personal music. Because of this inconsistency, Rocket Punch's musical identity remains more desire than reality.

### ***7.2.2 Girl Performers in the Mixed-Gender Band***

There are still much fewer girl than boy performers in amateur and professional rock bands in Japan, and neither girl performers in mixed-gender bands nor those in all-female bands are regarded as 'normal' without explanation. Reasons for the rarity of girl performers in rock bands are multiple. In this section, in order to clarify various barriers supposed to be imposed on girl performers, I divide the data of my ethnographic work into two: firstly, girl performers in mixed-gender bands; secondly, girl performers in all-girl bands. Through analysing female pupil performers' discourse within each type, I show how they thought about popular music practices, and to what extent their attitudes were similar to and different from those of male performers.

Firstly, I discuss girl performers in the mixed-gender band. In my ethnographic research, there was only one girl vocalist in the informal space who joined a mixed-gender band: Miyo, the vocalist of Rocket Punch. However, as Miyo was first recruited as a fill-in for a male singer who had been fired because of his laziness, she did not belong to the peer subculture of Rocket Punch outside school, and did even not appear in the interview held in Shû's room. As Miyo was a friend of Satoru's girlfriend, it can be said that she gained access to the male band through her female social network.

As most of the members of Rocket Punch belonged to High School X, one of their band activities was the school event, for which they had to collect all band members from within the school, such as Miyo, the vocalist, and Hiroshi, the deputy bassist. As Rocket Punch played few gigs that were nothing to do with school, Miyo sufficed as a vocalist for their 'public' aspect at that time. The Millennium Band, discussed in Chapter 6, also recruited a girl vocalist from their school in order to play at school events. Thus, the school can constrain the membership of pupil rock bands,

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equivalent to the English 'cute'.

particularly with respect to girls. Whereas, boys find it relatively easy to form their bands through their male friendship networks, girls must wait until they are called.

To put this another way, girl performers in the informal space find it difficult to gain access to male social networks. As reviewed in Chapter 3, Clawson called our attention to the sex-segregation of band members, especially in their early teenage years (Clawson 1999). This male/female division forces girl performers to start from disadvantageous positions compared to their male counterparts, not least because rock bands are often regarded as symbols of masculine solidarity. From the start, girl performers have to manage the masculinity of rock music.

Miyo, the promising young female singer of Rocket Punch, explored her musical identity through band activities. She told me how she hoped to follow UA, a Japanese woman singer with a powerful soul voice. Although Miyo sang songs from Judy and Mary, the common music of Rocket Punch, in the school festival at High School X, when I attended the band's gig in July 1998 outside school, she sang UA's songs very seriously. While she sang Judy and Mary very lightly and coquettishly, she sang UA with discreet and deep expression. Other members of Rocket Punch respected Miyo's love for UA and during her performance of UA's songs, acted like her backing band.

Miyo's boyfriend belonged to another band. Clawson (1999) reported that heterosexual dyads in adolescence does not necessarily give girls greater access to mixed-gender activities.

[W]omen who joined bands during high school reported that their involvement grew out of their participation in mixed-sex friendship groups or recruitment by 'friends of friends', not out of heterosexual dating... The disqualification of girlfriends from the category of 'appropriate' band member reveals the conflation of music, camaraderie, and masculinity that characterises and indeed galvanises the rock band. (Clawson 1999: 107)

This rule found in Boston also applies to the gendered network of rock bands in Japan. The fact that Miyo's boyfriend was a drummer in another band defended her from the gender politics in Rocket Punch. Moreover, as Miyo was respected as a talented vocalist, who shared the boys' passion for classic rock, she was on equal terms with

the boys. So, it was possible for her to perform her personal music, that is, UA with the band.

### *7.2.3 Girl Performers in the All-Girl Band*

Shy was an all-girl band organised in a folk song club in a girls' high school, and its performances were based on extra-curricular activities. Shy consisted of four girls: Mami (vocal), Eri (bass), Saki (guitar) and Hitomi (drums). As Mami was the girlfriend of Ken, the guitarist of Rocket Punch, he introduced me to Shy in July 1998, and I interviewed the group when they did a joint gig with Rocket Punch at a community centre near High School X. Although Shy was organised as an extra-curricular activity, their main musical practices and gigs took place outside school, in such places as a private rental studio, that is, an informal space. I analyse each member's discourse, and discuss their shared difficulties with continuing band activities.

Mami had already graduated from high school, but still attended extra-curricular activities, as I elucidated in Chapter 4. I will discuss her description of power relations amongst the four girls of the band. As Mami was the oldest, she and the others regarded her as a leader. She talked to me about how she started to sing in a band:

[Interview 33; Mami (f), Eri (f), Saki (f) and Hitomi (f); community centre as a gig venue]

*KK:* When did you start to sing?

*Mami:* When? Let's see [.]

*KK:* When did you find singing very interesting?

*Mami:* Not at all.

*Eri:* Didn't you?

*KK:* So, did you start to sing when you started band activity?

*Mami:* Yeah, when I was in junior high school.

*Eri:* You belonged to a so-and-so club, didn't you?

*Mami:* School choir.

*Saki:* School choir?

*Hitomi:* Incredible!

- Saki: I can't believe it!
- KK: Are you from the school choir? Which part did you sing when you belonged to the school choir?
- Mami: Soprano.
- KK: How did you think about the school choir in high school?
- Mami: When I entered high school, I met other members in the folk song club.
- KK: So, did you join the folk song club when you entered high school and started to sing? Were there any triggers for you to start singing in a band?
- Mami: Singing [...] singing in chorus, I really liked chorus. But I gradually wanted to sing alone.
- KK: You wanted to sing alone [...] When you were a junior high school pupil, were there any singers whom you wanted to become a singer like her or him?
- Mami: There wasn't any [...] such a singer.
- Eri: Do you merely like to sing?
- Mami: There's no. Definitely, any.
- KK: Nobody influenced you. I see.

The other members of Shy expressed surprise that Mami had sung in the school choir, which they thought too strict and serious. However, Mami seemed unconcerned, possibly because she knew how classically-oriented extra-curricular activity in school can encourage potential singers, as was the case with Hayato of Crazy Sister, discussed in 6.2.1. The remarkable difference between Mami and Hayato is that the latter said that the decisive trigger for him to start singing was not school activity, but Ryûichi, a visual rock singer; whereas Mami said she was first inspired to sing by the school choir, and never disclosed the most influential artist in her life. Perhaps Mami was using her *public* experience in the school choir in order to shade her *private* experience in her everyday life, so as to be a 'good girl' even in the informal space. This contrast between Hayato and Mami again clearly shows the difference between boys' strategies and girls' tactics for talking about popular music practices in public.

Shy was a band which copied Kuroyume and Judy and Mary. Although the former was a visual rock and the latter a guitar band, these two bands were the

common music of Shy. Mami, as the band leader, seemed to take the initiative in constructing this common music.

It is interesting to compare the discourse of Mami in the interview with girl members of Shy, and those of the boy members of Rocket Punch. When I asked Mami about her musical preferences, she showed a clear difference between two interviews.

[Interview 32; Ken (m), Shû (m), Satoru (m), Hiroshi (m), Akira (m) and Mami (f); Shû's room]

*KK:* What artist are you fond of at the moment?

*Mami:* Kuroyume.

*Akira:* How popular Kuroyume is!

*Ken:* In the visual rock area.

*Mami:* And I like *L'arc* (L'arc~en~ciel).

*KK:* Have you liked visual *kei* for a long time?

*Mami:* Nope. I really hated it before.

*KK:* You hated it [.] what triggered your liking for it?

*Mami:* When I joined the folk song club, the band to which I belong decided to play Kuroyume, so I had to remember its songs.

*KK:* So, you joined the folk song club and then began to listen to Kuroyume, didn't you?

*Mami:* There were two vocalists at that time in the band. And the other vocalist was a Kuroyume fan. But I also wanted to sing in the band, so I tried to devote myself to listen to Kuroyume and finally became a Kuroyume fan.

*Akira:* Your talk sounds very formal.

Despite the fact that Akira pointed out the formality of Mami's discourse, it is remarkable that she disclosed her personal music among boys, especially when compared to her 'tactical politeness' in the all-female band setting. Such relative ease might arise as a form of 'obedience' to the boys as the legitimate producers of the peer group's musical identity. In other words, in order to hide her musical identity from male peers, it was safer to follow their common music (visual rock). So, Mami's

obedience shows girls' tactics for reproducing the gender stereotype of the *passive* girl and the *active* boy in the informal setting. Mami tactically interwove her musical experiences in her band with the common music of the mixed-gender peer group in which she disclosed her personal music under the umbrella of visual rock.

The second girl, Eri had also graduated from high school, and was Mami's best friend. She talked to me about how she started playing bass in the band.

[Interview 33; Mami (f), Eri (f), Saki (f) and Hitomi (f); community centre as a gig venue]

KK: How about you, Eri? When did you start playing bass?

Eri: The third year [Year 9] in junior high school.

KK: What was a trigger for you to start playing?

Eri: I had been fond of a band.

KK: The band to which you listened?

Eri: [Nod] At first, I did play guitar, but I became frustrated with it.

KK: May I ask why? Why did you quit playing guitar and find bass much more interesting?

Eri: 'Cause, there are so many strings on the guitar! [laugh]

Saki: What a simple reason!

Eri: 'Cause I'm very single-minded.

KK: Then, do you really like playing bass?

Eri: Yeah.

KK: What bands did you listen to?

Eri: *Bai-seku* [By-sexual, categorised into a visual rock band] at that time.

KK: *Bai-seku*.

Eri: And nowadays, Hide.

KK: Do you like visual-*kei*?

Eri: Accidentally, it is visual rock to which I start to listen.

In the case of Eri, her interest had been developed not at school, but in the leisure setting through listening to a visual rock band. It is interesting that, like many boy bassists, her initial ambition was not to play bass but guitar. Eri's role models were



male musicians because of her musical orientation towards visual rock which has no female bassists.<sup>20</sup>

The third girl, Saki was a third year (Year 12) pupil in high school who played guitar in Shy. Her icon was GLAY, one of the most popular visual rock bands when she was in the end of the third year (Year 9) of junior high school. She told me that she started playing guitar because she hoped to follow GLAY. Saki seemed the most enthusiastic performer amongst the members of Shy.

[Interview 33]

*KK:* Do you have any other interest besides musical performance?

*Saki:* I devote myself to playing guitar all the time.

*KK:* Do you improve your guitar technique?

*Saki:* Yeah. Or say, I simply find it very interesting rather than to make progress.

*KK:* Which do you prefer, playing or listening?

*Saki:* I find playing interesting.

Saki's discourse provided a marked contrast to that of boy performers such as Takuya in the Millennium Band or Satoru in Rocket Punch. Whereas these two drummers were anxious to improve themselves professionally, Saki seemed less interested in improving her musical skill, than enjoying the guitar.

The last girl, Hitomi was also a third year (Year 12) high school pupil and the drummer of Shy. Her discourse on band activities seemed like a compound of the other three members.

[Interview 33]

*KK:* When did you start playing drums?

*Hitomi:* Let's see...since May last year.

*KK:* In the beginning of your second year [Year 11] ?<sup>21</sup>

*Hitomi:* At first, I wanted to be a vocalist.

*KK:* So, you mean, at the beginning, you started being in a band as a vocalist

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<sup>20</sup> As there were no female glitter rockers in 1970s in Britain, there are no female visual rock performers in Japan.

<sup>21</sup> See the footnote to p. 140.

and then shifted to being a drummer.

*Hitomi:* Yes.

*KK:* Were there any reasons? Why did you want to shift to being a drummer?

*Hitomi:* I hadn't played drums before.

*KK:* Well [...] were there any musicians who influenced you to start playing drums?

*Hitomi:* Nope, there wasn't any.

*KK:* You just wanted to play drums [...] Right. What artists do you usually listen to?

*Hitomi:* Hitomi<sup>22</sup> listens to Bai-seku.

On the one hand, Hitomi was close to Eri in that she shifted her position from vocalist to drummer and her personal music was By-sexual. On the other hand, like Mami, she said that no musicians influenced her. Meanwhile, her enthusiasm for the drums was reminiscent of Saki's towards the guitar. It may be that, as the last interviewee of the group interview, Hitomi compounded the discourses of the other three members, especially given that she showed a lack of confidence in her musical orientation compared to the other three girls.

Next, I would like to elucidate the common experiences and difficulties of the four girls in Shy. First of all, they showed confidence in their band activities in contrast to Keiko in the Millennium Band and Chika in Loose in the semi-formal space. The reason for this confidence was that Shy basically played together as an extra-curricular activity in the girls' high school where there were no male groups. Keiko and Chika, on the other hand, were hesitant to push forward their own personal music in front of the boy members of the bands because they lacked confidence in the face of much more proficient boy performers. The next transcript shows their confidence in their performance before Shy's gig.

[Interview 33]

*Mami:* Anyway, please listen to our performance.

*KK:* I will.

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<sup>22</sup> There is a tendency for girls to use their proper names in informal conversation, which gives a

*Hitomi:* You will never fail to find us great!

*Mami:* Yeah, great.

*Saki:* Great!

*Hitomi:* Greatest of all!

*KK:* Do you mean 'great' in a good sense?

*Hitomi:* In a good sense [...] you may find it phantasmagorical, from Kuroyume to *Judi-mari* [Judy and Mary]! So wide.

This confidence was the opposite of women performers' self-devaluation in Clawson (1999), who found it difficult to be confident with their musical skills in the male dominated world of bands.

In contrast to the men's almost teleological accounts of their early musical activities, women offered narratives of devaluation. They were dismissive, assigning little value to efforts they carefully defined as 'not serious', 'not real', or as necessarily subordinated to other more important concerns. (Clawson 1999: 111)

The confidence of the girls in *Shy* can also be seen in their independent attitudes.

[Interview 33]

*KK:* Do you think that adults understand what you are doing through band activities?

*Mami:* I never want them to understand us.

*KK:* What does your family say about your band activities?

*Mami:* They say, 'do it'.

*KK:* 'Do it' [...] So, do they never say 'stop it'?

*Mami:* No, never.

*Saki:* My parents also encourage me, as I am doing what I really want to.

*KK:* How about financial support from the family?

*Mami:* I've never expected them to support me financially.

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childish impression.

- KK:* Haven't you? So, do you all wish to support yourself on your finance?  
Do you buy instruments by yourself?
- All:* [Nod]

The members of Shy acknowledged their acquired capital of Japanese visual rock as their common music within the context of band activity. In this regard, Shy was close to the expressive band, which took visual rock as their cultural capital, acquired from peer networks rather than inherited capital of classic rock from their family members (see Chapter 6). Moreover, the members of Shy oriented themselves, not towards costume playing girls mentioned earlier in this chapter, but towards playing visual rock in their band.

The main difficulty for the girls in Shy was that, whilst they desperately hoped to continue their band activity, they did not know how to compose original songs, and, although they were still in the first stage of their band's career, they intended to break up after the gig that I attended in July 1998. They explained why:

[Interview 33]

- KK:* Do you play in the band as a hobby? Or [.]
- Mami:* Well, how can we say [.]
- Eri:* Today's gig is the last for us.
- KK:* That means, are you going to break up?
- Eri:* Yeah. But we will not break up because of quarrels.
- KK:* Have you decided to break up by yourself?
- Saki:* Yeah.
- KK:* May I ask the reason? Because of a lack of time?
- Eri:* There are various reasons.
- Mami:* The discrepancy in musical tastes.
- KK:* The discrepancy of musical tastes [.] I thought that all of your musical tastes are quite similar in a sense.
- All:* [Laugh]
- KK:* I suppose that it is too early to break up, as you said that you have organised only for a year and had gigs only three times.

*Saki:* As we get accustomed to band activities, we gradually find many difficulties.

*Eri:* Yeah. We've found [.]

*Saki:* Accidentally, we've found them very early.

*KK:* You all seem very dry.

*All:* [Laugh]

*Hitomi:* But we had a wonderful time.

*KK:* So, are you going to be a solo performer?

*Hitomi:* For me, it's a hobby.

*KK:* Do you hope to join a mixed-sex band?

*Saki:* Has anybody already made up her mind?

*KK:* Do you plan to compose original songs?

*Eri:* Of course. I hope to do it.

*KK:* Or, do you want to do something different from band activities?

*Saki:* Nope. I want to play in a band.

*KK:* You mean, you want to play in a band, but not in this band. Am I right?

*Saki:* Yeah.

Although they all liked visual rock as common music, the four girls' personal music was different within sub-categories of visual-*kei*, from Kuroyume and By-sexual, through to GLAY. Eri could never accept non-visual rock bands, whilst Mami intensely disliked contemporary mainstream popular songs composed by Tetsuya Komuro. Both girls had similar stoical and narrow-minded attitudes to non-visual rock band.

[Interview 33]

*KK:* Do you listen to Misu-chiru or Spitz? How about these bands, so-called non-visual-*kei*?

*Eri:* I have no chance to listen to them. I don't even want to listen to them.

*KK:* How do you think about Komuro-*kei*?

*Mami:* I wouldn't say I hate it, but I don't want to play it in the band.

As I discussed in Chapter 6, the discrepancy between the personal music of the

members of the originals band often helped them to write original songs. In order to conquer his own musical world, boy members of the originals band made an effort to open his ears to other members' personal music. Indeed, as Bayton (1998) pointed out, such discrepancies can be productive for girls.

Musicians-wanted cards for male bands stress the style of music to be played and include the names of the bands that have influenced them, whilst advertisements for all-female bands typically do not because it would narrow down the female musician population likely to apply. The positive side to this is that a variety of musical styles and experiences can, and often does, converge into something quite original. (Bayton 1998: 84)

However, the girls in Shy could not find any way to unite their diverse musical orientations by writing original songs, and it was this failure to unify the musical orientation of the band that led to their breakup.

The girls' ambition to 'make it' as a band and their lack of original songs showed a marked inconsistency. Saki's ambition was close to those of *Kawa-jum Folk*, the originals band discussed in Chapter 6 (see pp. 160-162). She told me 'I want to continue playing guitar in a band at gig venues. I want to be a guitarist of a band that will have a great reputation at gig venues, if possible'. Meanwhile, here again, Mami showed her independent mind as follows.

[Interview 33]

*KK:* Do you hope to sing songs composed by others?

*Mami:* Nope, in the band.

*KK:* Or, do you plan to become a singer-songwriter by yourself?

*Mami:* My first intention is the band activity. So, if one of the members of the band will compose songs, I want to sing them.

*KK:* You want to.

*Mami:* How can I say?

*Eri:* Total strangers.

*Mami:* Yeah, like Tetsuya Komuro.

*Saki:* I hate his style.

*Mami:* The system that a music producer has prepared songs and gives them to singers. I really hate that way, like him.

*KK:* So, you dislike him, don't you?

*Mami:* I don't say I dislike his music [.] but I really hate his ways of musical production.

At the same time, they showed uncertainty about their musical knowledge.

[Interview 33]

*KK:* Do you plan to play some special musical genres?

*Mami:* Not decided yet. I want to join a new band first of all, and then decide with other members.

*KK:* Do you wish to create original songs through band activities?

*Mami:* That's it.

*KK:* Do you write words for songs?

*Mami:* Yeah, I do.

*KK:* And do you also compose songs?

*Mami:* I can't compose songs.

*KK:* Can't you?

*Mami:* I can't.

*KK:* Why don't you use a computer? In these days, there seems to be useful equipment such as MIDI or [.]

*Mami:* I don't have such equipment. First of all, I have no knowledge how to compose original songs.

*KK:* Boys seem to learn music theory by themselves [.]

*Mami:* I don't want to learn by myself.

*KK:* How about you, Saki? Do you compose songs with guitar?

*Saki:* I've been trying to do so. But I don't know how to do it.

*KK:* Is there anybody who can teach you how to compose songs?

*Saki:* There's nobody whom I can ask.

*KK:* So, if you wish to compose, do you have to study by yourself?

*All:* [Nod]

Although these girls had gradually noticed that the limitation of their musical expression was caused by their lack of theoretical knowledge, they were at a loss as to how to improve. Ironically, the breakup of Shy was the only way for them to continue playing in a band.

Different degrees of seriousness between band members often causes the breakup of all-male bands, and can be fatal to ambitious girl performers. Saki's enthusiasm for the guitar was quite different to that of Eri for the bass. As sociologists of education show (e.g. Kimura 1999), girls' aspirations go on to higher education are cooled down by schools' hidden curriculum. Teachers' covert demands 'to be feminine', their suggestions that 'it is unnecessary for girls to strive for success', and their advice 'to study subjects which are suitable for girls' all discourage them from studying, and from applying to medical or law schools which are dominated by male students. As school culture restricts girls' success in society, it is only natural that they might limit themselves to thinking of their band activities as only hobbies. Whilst Saki followed female role models, such as Kanako Nakayama and Kaori Okui of Princess Princess, the most successful all-girl band in late 1980s Japan, the other three members of Shy did not seem to notice the importance of a role model with whom to identify, and their musical ambitions were very vague.

Saki's enthusiasm for playing the guitar was a reaction against her miserable experiences in music class.

[Interview 33]

*KK:* Were you good at music in elementary school?

*Saki:* I hated it.

*KK:* Did you hate it?

*Saki:* Yeah, I really hated it.

*KK:* Why did you hate it?

*Saki:* Whenever I had a test on a recorder, I was always trembling with fear.

*Hitomi:* You must have made a strange noise!

*Saki:* I feared it. I hated it, 'cause I hated to do something in front of others.



*Hitomi:* Your character has totally changed.

*Saki:* It seems so to me.

Although Saki was very shy as a elementary school pupil, she had conquered her fear and could now play guitar on stage, which gave her opportunities to express herself.

However, compared to the boy drummers mentioned above, Saki's ambition to become a musician was still weak. With few role models of female musicians, and no 'talk shop' amongst band members, Saki found it difficult to identify herself as a potential musician. Clawson (1999) also wrote about this difficulty for girls.

The interviews reveal that despite the male-dominated character of rock music, some women respondents developed ambitions to perform, which were sometimes inspired by media figures, both female and male. Yet these aspirations were frequently stalled. Teenage girls seemed to have a harder time translating their desire to become rock musicians into the practical experience that was readily available to boys. (Clawson 1999: 102)

These girls' lack of both confidence and knowledge of how to write original songs were inextricably bound up with their lack of opportunity in the male-dominated world of popular music.

### **7.3 Summary**

These interviews with a boy listener, visual band costume playing girls, and both boys and girls in bands, were all conducted in informal spaces. The boy listener, whose parents kept a huge record collection, had been surrounded by classic rock as the standard music that he shared with the older generation. It is likely that he did not even notice his own personal music, and, like members of the nerd band in Chapter 6, he was cautious not to disclose his personal music even in the informal space. Because he had not developed a strategy for negotiating with others about popular music, his discourse on his personal music was the most ambiguous of all the boys in the semi-formal and informal spaces.

The costume playing girls identified intensely with their icons when they were

amongst their peers, but acted as ordinary citizens in their everyday school or home settings where they concealed their 'other selves'. Meanwhile, the tactical use of common music, such as Judy and Mary in karaoke, served to conceal their personal music in front of their schoolmates. So, girl wannabes bond, not through band activity, but through costume playing of their visual rock band icons. Besides the wannabe girls who wished to 'become' their icon rock stars, there were other kinds of costume playing girls which I called 'expressive nerds'. Whilst the formers' feelings of admiration for rock stars were similar to those of boy performers in bands, the latter regarded visual rock stars as merely 'accessible materials for costume playing'. The subcultural superiority of wannabes over costume playing nerds reflects the traditional hierarchy of boys' *active, public* performing culture over girls' *passive, private* listening culture. Due to this subcultural hierarchy based on the traditional patriarchy of rock, the costume playing expressive nerds still find it difficult to discuss their personal music, and therefore resort to tactics, even in the informal space. However, girls, who had been oppressed in other spaces, seemed to finally find themselves in their costume playing subculture. In order to guard this 'Promised Land', costume playing girls develop tactics for keeping their personal music, that is visual rock, invisible in school or at home, so as to avoid invasion. For expressive nerd girls, the practice of costume playing enables the tactical representation of their existence in male-dominated rock culture.

The four boys in the band divided into those whose knowledge of rock took the form of inherited capital from their fathers, and those whose knowledge of rock was acquired capital from other boys. In the former group, the boy who went to private school and was encouraged to play in a band both in school and at home, had accumulated his extensive knowledge as inherited capital in the embodied state. As a result, he took on the role of constructing the musical identity of the band, by making use of personal, common and standard music. Meanwhile, the group's drummer developed his musical self-confidence only relatively recently, by playing in the band. Hence, his personal music was based on their common music. In the relatively difficult case of bassist by proxy, his personal music was Japanese guitar band, as against the Western-European classic rock and Japanese visual rock which formed the band's common music. Therefore, this boy's personal music was strategically eliminated

within the context of the band's subcultural peer group in order to control their musical identity.

Amongst the girls, the vocalist of the mixed-gender band made use of tactics to put forward her personal music, and was a thoroughly businesslike musician. Likewise, the vocalist in the all-girl band tactically disclosed her personal music under the umbrella of visual rock as the common music of her mixed-gender peer culture. In contrast to these two vocalists' tactics in the mixed-gender band and peer culture, girls' discourses on popular music in the all-girl band were much closer to boys' visible strategies for talking about popular music. However, their lack of both a musical identity and the ability to compose gave them insufficient confidence to manage the male-dominated world of rock, in which there are so few role models for girl musicians. It seems ironic that the two girl vocalists' tactics for concealing their personal music in mixed-gender band settings seemed the most effective way for them to survive in such intimidating circumstances.

De Certeau's distinction between strategies and tactics traverses different learning spaces, and illuminates the difference between boys' visible strategies and girls' invisible tactics in all three learning spaces, although the extent of differentiation, negotiation and concealment of personal music differ between them.

## Chapter 8

### Conclusion

#### 8.1 Popular Music and Sites: Place and Space

In this study I focussed on how Japanese high school girls and boys related to popular music inside and outside school. The main aim of the thesis was to bridge the gap between two streams of study on popular music and youth – music education studies *inside* school and subcultural studies *outside* school – in relation to musical practice and gender. As a result of this connection between school and leisure sites, three learning spaces have been conceptualised as the first finding of the thesis: the *formal*, *semi-formal* and *informal* spaces. As discussed in Chapter 4, whereas pupils were given legitimate musical knowledge in the formal space, they were not in the informal space. In addition, whilst pupils were assessed by teachers and outsiders in the former, they were not in the latter. In between, there was the semi-formal space in which pupils used non-legitimate musical knowledge, but they were still assessed, or in other words, evaluated by others. In general, it is thought that legitimate knowledge and assessment relate only to the school, and not to the leisure site. However, by using the concepts of *place* and *space* as defined by de Certeau (4.4), it has been revealed that non-legitimate musical knowledge can be employed inside school as the semi-formal space – the folk song club (6.1). A conflict between the personal music of band members and the common music of the band was seen in the school folk song club, which was similar to that in the subcultural peer band of the informal space. The reverse is also true. Assessment occurs outside school as the semi-formal space – the high school pupils' band event (6.2). The selection of the representative band and song at the band event in the leisure site functioned as an assessment, or even as surveillance over pupils, which

was similar to that in the school. Furthermore, it has been recognised that pupils' discourses on popular music differed according to each space, intricately related to pupils' gender and musical practices.

## **8.2 Popular Music and Space: Personal, Common and Standard Music**

The second finding, but the first and foremost contribution of this study, was the tripartite understanding of popular musical capital as either 'personal music', 'common music' or 'standard music'. These categories relate to pupils' techniques for employing discourses about popular music according to various settings. If pupils simply concealed their favourite music in the formal space, popular music would be divided into only two: 'school knowledge' of educationally shared popular songs arranged for classroom materials, and 'everyday knowledge' of popular music acquired in pupils' everyday lives outside school. However, in order to conceal their 'personal music' – private musical tastes – in the formal space, pupils complicated the meanings of popular music by constructing a 'common music' – musical knowledge shared with a subcultural peer group of the same generation – separate from their own personal music. Moreover, 'standard music' – shared musical capital across generations — was used as the mutual knowledge of pupils', teachers' and parents' generations. It has been shown that the school is the very place where these three categories of popular music enter into the most complex interplay of politics around 'what counts as popular music' through pupils' various techniques (4.5).

'Personal music' is connected with pupils' everyday musical practices, and belongs to each person at an individual level, regardless of their generation. It relates to pupils' identities, and can be regarded as individual and private, as musical habitus or cultural capital in the embodied form in Bourdieu's terms (see p. 47). This thesis has identified that while boys in general were much more positive in talking about their

personal music both inside and outside school, girls were hesitant to declare their personal musics in front of others. However, boys' strategies of discursive negotiation and girls' tactics for making use of common music in order to conceal their own personal music lead me to conclude that even 'personal music' can change substantially in the context of different spaces. Erving Goffman (1959) proposed that:

[t]he crucial sociological consideration...is merely that impressions fostered in everyday performances are subject to disruption. We will want to know what kind of impression of reality can shatter the fostered impression of reality, and what reality really is can be left to other students. (Goffman 1959: 72)

Similarly, my finding in this study is to clarify *how* boys and girls represent their musical identities according to various spaces, rather than to reveal the existence of teenagers' 'real' or 'true' musical tastes. So whether or not the popular music discussed by a boy in a classroom was *really* his or not makes little difference to the theme I have proposed in this thesis, because boys made use of 'personal music' as an indicator to keep their position within the peer group in school. For male pupils, disclosing personal music in public was a matter of self-positioning. Because of fear of this disclosure, girls dodged my questions on their personal music in school, by using common music instead.

It is perhaps natural for both girls and boys to develop techniques for protecting their personal music in public. If they do not, their musical identities may easily be infringed by others, since pupils cannot evade interpersonal relationships even in the informal space in contemporary society. This is the very reason why common music and standard music appear in every setting with regard to youth and popular music.

Whereas personal music relates to the 'private' aspect of pupils' everyday

musical practices, 'common music' and 'standard music' imply their 'public' aspect. The difference between the latter two categories is that, whilst common music is shared by the same generation, standard music is performed and listened to across different generations. Among the three categories of popular music, only 'standard music' can become 'shared' popular music of both teachers and pupils in school; and it is therefore legitimated over and above the other two categories, i.e. personal and common music, in the formal learning space. Our understanding of how popular music functions in school and leisure sites can be enhanced by the conception of these three categories of popular music.

I would like to conclude with the significance of the categorisation of popular music in this thesis from the perspective of the conflict between musical sub-styles of the *personal* music and *common* music of pupils' peer groups. In the formal space, Naoto could not play his *personal* music (guitar band) because of his band's exclusive focus on visual rock as their *common* music (5.1.1). In the semi-formal space, Takuya and Wataru could only cover bands with a female vocalist, which caused conflict between these two boys' *personal* 'male band' music and the *common* 'female band' music (6.1.2). In the informal space, the second bassist Hiroshi, whose *personal* music was guitar band, had to accommodate himself to the *common* music of his band, which was visual rock (7.2.1). In every case, the power politics between members of the peer group affected boys' discourses about popular music in various settings. In other words, the conflict between personal and common music reflects the power politics of the subcultural peer group. However, as explained in Chapters 6, this conflict either guarantees the success of polishing up the common music of the bands such as originals bands (6.2.1), or leads to the break-up of bands such as Wataru's previous band (6.1.2). In the case of girls, they preferred to seek shelter under the common music of the peer group in order to keep their personal music secret in front of others, which averted open

conflict between personal and common music. In this regard, music teachers may come to notice that it is safer to avoid using the personal or common music of their pupils as materials in the classroom. My categorisation of popular music in the three spaces would help music teachers to understand the relationship between high school pupils and popular music in the following three ways. Firstly, why the range of favourite artists and bands tends to be wide in boys' discourses on popular music compared to that in girls'. The superficial coolness in girls' debating popular music in school does not necessarily lead to their indifference towards it and vice versa. Secondly, why some bands can conquer the conflict between the musical preferences of members and others cannot. This can be considered in detail in relation to the concepts of personal and common music. As the example of original bands showed (6.2.1), the stage of creating bands' original songs as common music is the touchstone of the success in continuing their band activities, which characterises idiosyncratic amateur band culture in Japan. Thirdly, how to make use of standard music in the classroom by showing both closeness and remoteness from pupils' personal and common music. Music teachers should be careful not to infringe on pupils' inner worlds of personal music in school. However, if teachers regard only standard music as legitimate popular music in the music class, the chasm between standard music as school knowledge and personal music as everyday knowledge still remains. The use of common music of the pupils' generation would be one effective means to bridge musical knowledge inside and outside school.

### **8.3 Popular Music and Gender: Strategies and Tactics**

As the analyses in Chapters 5 to 7 have shown, boys' and girls' techniques for dealing with popular music differed prominently, which is the third finding of this study. The application of de Certeau's distinction between *strategies* and *tactics* to boys' and girls' techniques has supported this finding (5.3). Male pupils used overt *strategies* for



negotiating with their subcultural peer groups. In contrast, female pupils used covert *tactics* for cloaking their personal music in front of others. The distinction between girls' tactics and boys' strategies can be seen from the formal through to the semi-formal and informal spaces.

Due to their ability to position themselves within the subcultural peer group, boys did not hesitate to disclose their personal music in relation to common music or standard music in public, and so each member of the peer group could make use of others' discourses as a point of reference to his own. On the other hand, girls tended to confirm the common music of the group before starting to talk about their personal music in public. This is partly because girls identify more with the musical culture of their home and their mothers, and they seemed clumsy at negotiating with others in the school or even in the band setting. Here girls' tactics for concealing their personal music were covert compared to boys' strategies, because girls were less concerned to master social situations. A conspicuous exception was the costume playing girls who confirmed Japanese visual rock as the common music of their subcultural peer group. However, in order to guard this feminine alternative subculture, these costume playing girls concealed their musical practices in school and at home, as a form of tactical representation of their existence as resistance to male chauvinistic rock culture.

This study has contributed to unravelling why boys and girls construct their musical identities differently through their discourses on popular music. Because of displaying keenness about self-positioning among peer members, boys had to use visible strategies as to popular music in each space. This power game among boys culminated in the formal space due to the difficulty of structuring the common music of the group through rapidly gaining consent in it. By contrast, because of the necessity to practise concealment to protect their deeper personal music from those about them, girls had to use invisible tactics as to popular music in each space. Those tactics became

most complicated in the formal space due to the hierarchy of three categorisation of popular music in it. The predominance of standard music in the formal space reassured girls about their inherited capital gained at home. Therefore, they felt confident to make use of standard music, or common music of their generation – a candidate for standard music across generations in future.

The use of strategies/tactics differed between all-female/male and mixed-gender peer groups. In most cases, boys employed visible strategies for positioning themselves both in all-male and mixed-gender peer groups from the formal through to the semi-formal and informal spaces. Meanwhile, girls had to change their discourses according to the gender component in the peer group. That is to say, when girls talked freely about their personal music among female peers in the informal space, but they had to be careful not to disclose their musical bonds to male outsiders of their all-female subcultural group. Moreover, as Mami's case (7.2.3) shows, in the mixed-gender peer group, girls seemed relaxed to follow boys' common music. She tactically disclosed her personal music under the umbrella of the common music of the mixed-gender band, even though she was cautious enough to display her public experience in the school choir as her first passion for music in order to shade her private musical preferences in the all-female band. As strategies/tactics for employing popular music in various settings are intricately gendered, it is difficult to find critical ways to present popular music fairly in schools. This study hopes to provide insights into how this reified situation is structured, and how it can be challenged in its own terms.

#### **8.4 Popular Music and Musical Practices: Inherited and Acquired Capital**

The final finding of this study is its application of Bourdieu's theory of inherited and acquired cultural capital to pupils' knowledge and practices of popular music. While the former relates to the family, the latter relates to peers. Girls' mode of acquisition of

cultural capital could be seen most clearly in the formal space of the classroom, where they relied on 'standard music' as inherited capital, mainly from their mothers (5.2). Such girls took on a particularly 'old-fashioned' musical profile at school. Boys' two modes of acquisition of cultural capital were clearest in the semi-formal and informal spaces, in particular when they were with their bands. Several denied any influence by family members and emphasised the originality of their musical tastes. Meanwhile, other boy performers first heard Kiss or Led Zeppelin, not through the influence of their fathers or elder brothers, but through X Japan, who initiated so many Japanese boys into Western-European rock. Furthermore, such boy performers exchanged this acquired capital with their contemporaries. The tendency to avoid admitting the influence of the older generation was most remarkable among boys in expressive bands (6.2.1). Female pupils who most emphasised acquired capital were costume playing girls (7.1.3), who regarded their peer network as much more important than their cultural backgrounds at home.

Meanwhile, there were those who had inherited British/US-American classic rock as cultural capital, such as two male band-members in the informal space (7.2.1). These boys were male counterparts of girl listeners in the classroom setting, who identified with the music of their mothers' generation. I must emphasise that due to the musical genres of inherited capital which girls take over, namely, folk song as standard music, they are much more conformist in relation to the ethos of the music curriculum. That is to say, whilst boys' fathers transmit classic rock as everyday knowledge, girls' mothers transmit folk music as school knowledge. This difference of genres between boys' and girls' inherited capital seems to lead the latter's advantage in music classes which has been focussed much more on classically-oriented standard music rather than on classic rock. However, as classic rock is shared between the generations of parents and pupils, it could 'be raised' to the status of standard music in schools following the Beatles'

songs. The school music curriculum welcomes classic rock as boys' inherited capital as well as classically-oriented standard music as girls' inherited capital.

This study has shown a way to look at the relationship of youth and popular music inside and outside school in relation to three categories of popular music with reference to musical practices and gender. Its significance could, or should challenge some of the extant barriers between music in school and leisure sites.

## Appendix A: CD-ROM Supplement: Japanese Popular Music

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### Diva-kei example

Track 1: Dreams Come True ‘Ureshii! tanoshii! daisuki!’ [Happily, cheerfully, I Love You!]

### Guitar-kei examples

Track 2: Mr. Children ‘Innocent World’

Track 3: Yuzu ‘Natsuiro’ [Summer Colour]

Track 4: Ulfus ‘Guts daze’ [Let’s Have Guts!]

Track 5: Tamio Okuda ‘Ijû (easy) Rider 97’

Track 6: Judy and Mary ‘Hitotsu dake’ [Only One]

Track 7: Yôsui Inoue ‘Shônen jidai’ [Boyhood Days]

Track 8: Chage & Asuka ‘Sons and Daughters: Soreyori boku ga tsutaetai nowa’  
[I’d Rather Pass on to You...]

Track 9: B’z ‘Calling’

### Visual rock examples

Track 10: X Japan ‘Stab Me in the Back’

Track 11: Luna Sea ‘Storm’

Track 12: Malice Mizer ‘Gekka no yasôkyoku’ [Nocturne au clair de la lune]

Track 13: GLAY ‘Yûwaku’ [Temptation]

Track 14: L’arc~en~ciel ‘Niji’ [Rainbow]

Track 15: Shazna ‘Melly Love’

### Idol pop examples

Track 16: Speed ‘Go, Go, Heaven’

Track 17: SMAP ‘Oretachi ni asu wa aru’ [We Always Have Tomorrow]

Track 18: Kinki Kids ‘Garasu no shônen’ [Glass-like Fragile Boy]

Track 19: V6 ‘Wa ni natte odorô’ [Let’s Dance in a Circle]

### Komuro-kei example

Track 20: Globe ‘Departures’

## **Appendix B: Transcript Notation\***

[Interview 1; Noriyuki (m); a music teacher's anteroom] Extract headings refer to the names of the identification number of the interview, the participating informants (m=male pupil, f=female pupil) and the place of the interview. If the citation is extracted from the same interview as the previous one, I just put the number of the interview in the heading.

[.] Short pause (< 2 or 3 seconds)

[pause] Long pause (> 3 seconds)

... Horizontal ellipses indicate talk omitted from the data segment

. Vertical ellipses indicate intervening utterances omitted from the data segment  
.

\*This notation basically follows that of Wood and Kroger (2000: 193-194)

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